MOUNT WELLINGTON AND THE SENSE OF PLACE

by

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Earth, is not this what you want:

invisibly to arise in us?

Rilke

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Statement

Except as stated herein this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no copy or paraphrase of material previously published or written by another person, except when due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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Angus Barnes

The view from Mount Wellington at dawn
(Photograph courtesy of Scott Coleman)

ABSTRACT

Mount Wellington is a major feature of the topography of Hobart and the surrounding area. This study was undertaken to describe the significance of Mount Wellington using a phenomenological approach. As part of every-day living, people obviously and unavoidably develop relationships with places. The nature of these relationships, the essential qualities of place and the sense of place were described with reference to phenomenological studies of place. It was suggested that people form emotional bonds with places that are important for both the individual and for society as a whole.

The history of mountains indicates that they have been important places, often engendering a sense of reverence and providing spiritual replenishment. The significance of mountains in general was described with reference to Martin Heidegger's writings. Mountains most obviously reflect Heidegger's notion of 'the fourfold' and by 'thinking like a mountain', they may manifest 'Being'.

The significance of Mount Wellington was investigated with reference to its physical setting, the activities pursued on it and its more general meanings: the essential qualities of a place. Some artistic depictions of Mount Wellington's various poses were described. Early portrayals tended to focus on topographical idealism whilst later depictions often sought to emphasise the deeper meanings that Mount Wellington engenders. The many activities that people have pursued on Mount Wellington presented a diversity of relationships that people have developed with it. It was suggested that certain activities are more conducive to sensing the essence of Mount Wellington whilst the pursuit of others ignores this essence. The deeper meanings of Mount Wellington were described and it was noted that Mount Wellington has great significance for Hobartians. These meanings become apparent through authentic dwelling.

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INTRODUCTION

Places are essential features of a person's life. As we routinely conduct our everyday affairs so much of our experience of the place we live in is taken-for-granted. The genesis of this study came from my experience of travelling. In a relatively short period of time I travelled to a number of extremely different places and as a consequence became sensitized to experiencing each new place with a conscious intention. I became aware that my initial emotional response to a new place was often largely determined by its physical nature.

After returning to Hobart for a short stay and then travelling again, I realised that the physical setting of Hobart was an important benchmark against which I often compared other places. Home for twenty formative years, Hobart had impressed on me its character, for which I was eventually to feel a nostalgia. This study is an attempt to understand what, to me, is the most significant feature of Hobart and its surrounds, Mount Wellington.

Explicating the qualities of a place and peoples' relationships with a natural feature is difficult since these topics do not easily lend themselves to a rigorous framework. The study of human relationships with Mount Wellington is inherently descriptive and inter-disciplinary. Because of this I have chosen to adopt the phenomenological method as a means of explicating these relationships.

> Phenomenology begins with descriptive accounts of concrete things, events and experiences but its major task is to seek out within the uniqueness of concrete phenomena more general experiential structures, patterns and essences (Seamon 1982:121).

Phenomenological analysis is concerned with the essence of the phenomenon, the *eidos*, the essential structure that constitutes the being of a particular phenomenon (Pickles 1988:245).

The scientific method for understanding, positivism, is founded on empirical reality and validity, requiring data that is objective, quantifiable, predictable, repeatable and publicly verifiable (Seamon 1982:120). The component parts of places have been scientifically deciphered and categorized. Geology, botany, zoology and physical geography have become our means to understand and exploit our environment. But what are the relationships between these component parts when seen together, as they exist, not separated and viewed via maps and microscopes?

These relationships are synergistic; that is, they are greater than the sum of their individual physical parts. They project a particular spirit and atmosphere. As Jay Appleton queries, "can we be sure that the very process of breaking down landscape into its component parts does not destroy the essence of what we are investigating" (1975:121)? Just as the study of particular *objects* is best served by the scientific method, I believe the *phenomenon* of place is better understood phenomenologically.

A phenomenological approach does not seek to explain nor to establish a guiding theoretical framework beforehand. The phenomenologist must allow the patterns and relationships to appear and through empathetic looking and seeing secure ". . . accurate qualitative descriptions which will provide a base for authentic conceptual portrayals of the various dimensions of the person-environment relationship" (Seamon 1982:220).

A practical example may best illustrate the difference between positivism and phenomenology. A positivistic approach to analysing the people-mountain relationships may include distributing questionnaires. The general public would be asked to provide responses to relevant questions concerning their relationship. The researcher may then accumulate the similar responses, summarize them statistically and draw conclusions from the aggregated data, placing emphasis on those totals which are quantitatively greatest or least. It is assumed that the researcher is objective, merely a collector of information that would appear in much the same way

to any other researcher, with similar training and skill. The statistics may form the basis for comparative studies carried out in later years, and conclusions drawn from such comparisons.

A phenomenologist allows the phenomenon to reveal itself in all its concreteness and particularity. This understanding is gathered from his/her own experiences, in conjunction with the experiences of others. The phenomenologist is not separate from the phenomenon being studied but expressly part of it. The interpretive collection of the experiences of others forms part of the phenomenologist's own experience and these are not objectively set apart, but related in the context of the phenomenologist's own experience.

The study of place, and more explicitly the people-mountain relationships, involves understanding a complex web of interrelationships and connections that are in continual flux. The phenomenologist allows these to come forward, to be revealed in their own terms, rather than bracketing them, for example with statistics, which results in a loss of each relationship's particularity. A phenomenologist recognizes:

> . . . an indissolvable unity between person and world, or *being-in-the-world*, as phenomenologists often call it to emphasize a sense of immersion and integral person-world fusion (Seamon 1984a:174).

This immersion in the world results in a bonding between humans and the environment, one that is intensely personal and profoundly significant. Such a bonding has been described as topophilia, defined broadly ". . . to include all of the human being's affective ties with the material environment. These differ greatly in intensity, subtlety and mode of expression" (Tuan 1974a:93). The topophilia of places is discussed further in chapter one, in which I review studies of place, particularly those studies which reveal place from a phenomenological perspective.

In chapter two I discuss the nature of peoples' relationships with mountains

in general and investigate what it is about mountains that engenders a spiritual quality. I refer to the writings of the philosopher, Martin Heidegger, in explicating the essence of mountains since Heidegger wrote extensively on letting things show themselves as they are, a basic premise of phenomenology. In chapter three I begin to examine the specific topophilia of Mount Wellington. This chapter focuses on the physical setting of The Mountain and how people relate to its physical appearance. In chapter four I investigate the relationships people develop with The Mountain as a result of pursuing various activities on it. The meanings and significances of Mount Wellington are developed in chapter five.

With the advantage of hindsight, some limitations of this study are apparent, as are possible areas where future research could be directed. This study has focused specifically on Mount Wellington. I did not attempt to define The Mountain in terms of an area to avoid fragmenting or separating it from its surroundings, since essentially The Mountain's presence is dependent upon its setting. The Mountain does not stand apart but interacts with the Derwent River, the foothills and rivulets. The relationship between the River and The Mountain, for example, is particularly significant. As Jerry de Gryse, a landscape architect, suggested, this engenders a yin/yang-type quality; a journey to The Mountain is a journey within, a journey on the River is a journey outwards (pers. comm.). In a broader study these interrelationships could be developed further.

For many people the task of explicating their feelings about a place can be a difficult one, even though they have a deep affinity with it. This study tended to focus particularly on the perspective of artists. In terms of the historical media referring to The Mountain, I sought out such views since they were more likely to elucidate the person's sense of place explicitly. Also in interviewing people I sought those whom I knew had formed an affinity with The Mountain. A list of questions was sent to interviewees prior to the interview to enable them time to consider in advance their relationship with The Mountain (Appendix A). However I had many

informal discussions with numerous and various people about their relationships with The Mountain. The general feeling derived from these conversations has profoundly influenced this study, although it is often difficult to explicitly recognise specific references.

Further research could focus on particular groups of people and their relationships with The Mountain. For example I found the response of immigrants to Hobart interesting; often their feelings would change as they became more familiar with The Mountain. With a more direct focus and more time the attitudes of people who have lived all their lives under The Mountain may also be described.

This study draws from both historic and contemporary attitudes and activities in order to identify the significance of Mount Wellington. Such a study is useful for a number of reasons. For example, UNESCO's 'Programme on Man and the Biosphere' outlined in Project Thirteen that possible fields of action in researching 'The perception of environmental quality' could include analysis of the "perceptions of landscape, in both its aesthetic and historic aspects, and in terms of its past or proposed remodelling by man" (cited in Seddon 1976:4). An understanding of a place in this context may be necessary for its inclusion in the National Estate Register. For example, 'Criterion E' refers to a place's importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group and 'Criterion G' refers to a place's significance because of its strong associations with a particular community for social, cultural or spiritual reasons (Miller pers. comm.).

Also I believe studies such as this one are useful if they encourage people to explore their own experience of place and foster an understanding of the importance places have in their lives. To paraphrase Richard Flanagan, such a study is not an argument for either preservation or destruction, but for creation based on a full awareness of place, of people thinking, working, creating with regard to what that place is (1991:5).

CHAPTER 1

A Review of Place

In this chapter I review various studies of place, with a particular emphasis on those that have used a phenomenological approach. This review provides an insight into the more general patterns and essences of place that have been deciphered by others and these will be used as reference points to which the topophilia of The Mountain can then be related.

The Essence of Place

The phenomenon of place is described in a myriad of ways. The geographer, Yi-Fu Tuan, suggests two types of place that acquire particular significance, each a centre of power and meaning relative to its environs. The first describes place as a *field of care*, which is illustrated in Conrad Lopez's conversation with the Arctic landscape, reflecting a close, personal association that draws from years of firsthand experience of the place.

> The differing landscapes of the earth are hard to know individually. They are as difficult to engage in conversation as wild animals. The complex feelings of affinity and self assurance one feels with one's native place rarely develop again in another landscape (Lopez 1986:255).

His experience with the land, plants and animals was understood through his knowledge of earth sciences, but the descriptions of his relationships with the Arctic and its people combine this knowledge with his emotions and feelings. The native place is for Lopez a *field of care*; that is, a place that can be known in essence only from within, since it carries few visual signs that declare its nature (Tuan 1974b:237).

Another level of place is a *public symbol*, one with high imageability[1] that commands attention and awe (Tuan 1974b:237). Uluru in central Australia illustrates such a place. So persuasive is its imageability that it commands the attention of a diverse range of cultures and also illustrates what Tuan describes as an enduring place. It speaks to humanity, however there are

very few enduring places in the world, since most cannot survive the decay of their particular cultural matrix (1974b:240).

The levels on which one experiences places are many. By reduction, evidence of the experience of place may be shown on a neighbourhood, city, regional or even national level but in essence, as indicated by the two examples above, place is more than the marked-out, geographical boundaries; it is specific to each environment:

> The catalyst that converts any physical location - any environment if you will - into a place, is the process of experiencing deeply. A place is a piece of the whole environment that has been claimed by feelings (Gussow, cited in Devall and Sessions 1985:111).

Feelings towards one place, however, do not become mutually excluded from another place. There is a constant overlaying of feelings from one environment to another, a transporting of associations from one place to another. Places are identified in the lived-in-world by becoming foci for feelings and are thus given meaning.

The geographer, Edward Relph, in his phenomenological study, Place and Placelessness, believes:

> The basic meaning of place, its essence, does not therefore come from locations, nor from the trivial functions that places serve, nor from the community that occupies it, nor from superficial and mundane experiences - though these are all common and perhaps necessary aspects of places. The essence of place lies in the largely unselfconscious intentionality that defines place as profound centres of human existence (1976:43).

Relph notes that human intention should be understood as a relationship between people and the world that gives meaning (1976:42). Ultimately place is identified by meanings; one does not recognise the significance of a place until one understands or feels meanings associated with the place.

Qualities of Place

Places present a great diversity of qualities that engender a particular spirit and atmosphere. The Norwegian architect, Christian Norberg-Schulz, believes that the root of the spirit of a place, the *genius loci,* is the natural environment. He calls it the *natural place,* which "is not a mere flux of phenomena but has structure and embodies meaning" (1980:23). He identifies five qualities; 'thing' and 'order' refer to the spatial qualities of place, 'character' and 'light' relate to the overall atmosphere, and 'time' involves constancy and change in the place, especially in regard to daily and seasonal rhythms of weather, climate, vegetation and animal life (1980:32).

The natural place is in harmony with the human environment when buildings capture the essential *genius loci.* Norberg-Schulz comments on instances of this harmony occurring in vernacular, religious architecture:

> . . . the phenomenology of things and places is also the phenomenology of light . . . some [buildings] possess the one [slice of the sun][2] which belongs to the place. In the Mosque, the light of the desert appears as the force which makes things dissolve into star like patterns of rays. In the Nordic Stave-churches, the mystery of the forest is fixed and explained as "dark light". In the classical Temple the plastic forms of the orders reveals the dialectic of light and thing as the play of archetypal characters (cited in Plummer 1987:5).

He argues that places are essentially what they are because of inherent qualities in site and physical environment and goes as far as to claim that "places are permanent environmental-human wholes which maintain themselves temporally as actual events and generations come and go" (Seamon 1984a:175).

Norberg-Schulz's distinctly architectural analysis, stressing the natural environment as the foundation of place, may be comparable to Lawrence Durrell's view that ". . . people have little to do with the matter [of place] except in as much as they themselves are reflections of their landscape" (1969:161). Durrell further suggests hypothetically that

> . . . you could exterminate the French at a blow and resettle the country with Tartars, and within two generations discover, to your astonishment, that the national characteristics were back at norm - the restless metaphysical curiosity, the tenderness for good living and the passionate individualism: even though their noses were now flat (1969:157).

Rebecca West, observing that the people of Chicago had a similar addiction for self-analysis as characters in Russian novels, surmised that it was because:

> Chicago, like Leningrad, like Moscow is a high spot, to use its own idiom, on the monotony of great plains; a catchment area of vitality that rejoices extravagantly in its preservation because elsewhere in this region it might have trickled away from its source and been swallowed up in the vastness of the earth . . . And it may be that life which finds itself lost in the heart of a vast continent, whether that be Old or New, has a tendency to take the same forms (cited in Shepard 1977:30).

In an extended time frame there may be some merit to these views, though they exhibit an extreme faith in the power of the landscape.

They do, however, point to an alternative to the view of place seen as a sum of the various psychological, social, economic and political forces working on an environment at a particular point in time (Canter, cited in Seamon 1984a:131). This later outlook assumes that the physical landscape has no bearing on the development of places, that human intervention can convert one place into another.

In fact, both the physical landscape *and* human activities are essential qualities of place. As discussed above, a place is significant because of the meanings associated with it. These three qualities, the physical setting, the activities and the meanings are fundamental components of place irreducible one to the other, yet inseparably interwoven in people's experiences of places (Relph 1976:47). While recognising that each quality is

a component of a greater whole, "they can be identified as distinctive poles or focuses" (Relph 1976:43). Together these qualities engender a spirit or atmosphere that gives a place its particular personality; as a whole they are perceived as the *genius loci.*

Sense of Place

Genius loci and sense of place stem from different foci on place. *Genius loci* refers to the essential character of a place, the spirit or atmosphere engendered by the fundamental qualities of a place. The sense of place is developed when people sense the particular spirit of a place. Its focus is on the human experience of place.

The sense of place is the experiential *genius loci* that results in topophilia. It is unique to each individual; perceptions filter through various cultural and individual lenses according to the individual's experiences. We get to know a place through the possibilities and limitations of our senses. Perception is:

> both the response of the senses to external stimuli and purposeful activity in which certain phenomena are clearly registered while others recede in the shade or are blocked out. Much of what we perceive has value for us, for biological survival, and for providing certain satisfactions that are rooted in culture (Tuan 1974a:4).

The sensing of a place is reliant on the perception process and is therefore similarly influenced by a person's culture and experience.

For example, the visual system, the dominant sense for understanding, "has evolved genetically and learned by experience to deal with the environment in which we live" (Ross 1976:25). The commonalities of humans' visual perceptions are significant, yet the visual perceptions derived from experience have diverged to suit differing environments. For example, in the all-enveloping rain forest environment of the Congo, the Ba Mbuti Pygmies' visual perspective is tuned to see everything at close range. When a researcher took one to the open grasslands where a herd of buffaloes

grazed several miles away the Pygmy asked, "What insects are they?" (Tuan 1974a:80).[3]

These differences may result in individuals recognising different qualities in the landscape influencing their sense of place. An Eskimo explained to Lopez that on visiting a place his first action would be to sit and listen (1986:277). To sense sounds, smells, tastes and textures usually requires close contact and long association with the environment, in contrast with the visual sense. To develop an understanding of a place with all one's senses therefore involves an element of time.

A deeper understanding of the physical setting of a place is developed only after one has spent time in the place.

> Abstract knowledge about a place can be acquired in short order if one is diligent. The visual quality of an environment is quickly tallied if one has the artist's eye. But the 'feel' of a place takes longer to acquire. It is made up of experiences mostly fleeting and undramatic, repeated day after day and over the span of years. It is a unique blend of sights, sounds and smells, a unique harmony of natural and artificial rhythms such as times of sunrise and sunset or work and play. The feel of a place is registered in one's muscles and bones (Tuan 1977:136).

The amount of time it takes to 'feel' a place is immeasurable. Over time, one also becomes immersed in activities in the place and develops a sense replete with associations and meanings. The sense of place hints at something more than just physical perception of the environment, since it evokes the *genius loci*, and all the complex bundles of meanings and symbols associated with the spirit.

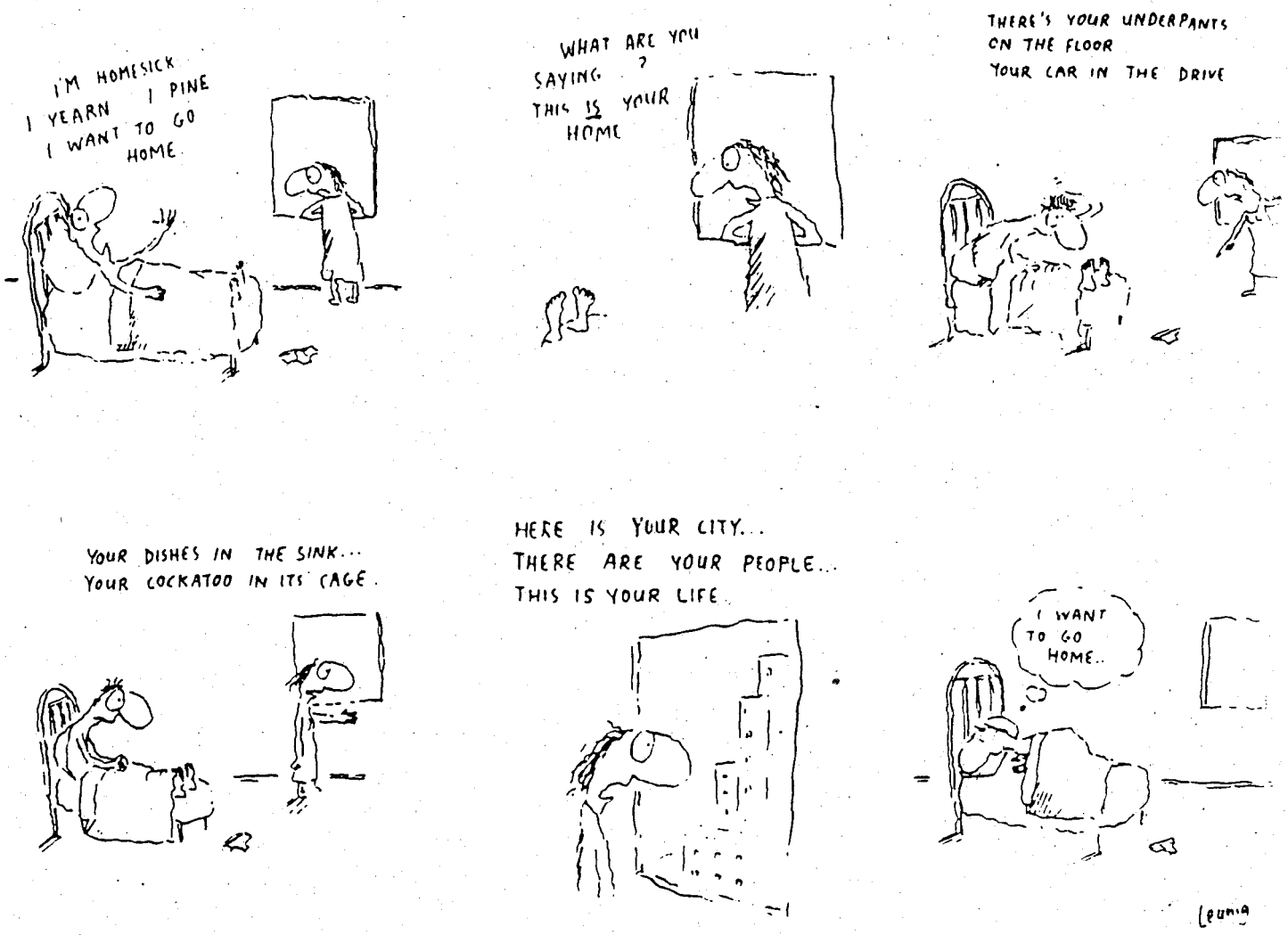
The ability to sense the meanings of place requires not only time but what Relph describes as *insideness*. To feel inside a place infers being here rather than there, enclosed rather than exposed, secure rather than threatened (Seamon 1984a:174). Relph goes on to express varying degrees of insideness, and at the other extreme, *outsideness*.[4] These levels are by no means

exhaustive and there is no abrupt distinction between them. Although the inside-outside continuum is useful for understanding the levels of emotional attachment to places, it harbours a relatively static view of these attachments.

By living in a place, people may unconsciously embody associations the significances of which they do not recognize until they are removed from the place. Most people experience the reciprocity of rest and movement, security and adventure, home and horizons of reach in their lived-in-world. Anne Buttimer observed: "like breathing in and breathing out, most life forms need a *h o m e* and *horizons of reach* outward from that home" (1980:170).

The home and reach of one's thoughts and imagination may be quite distinct from the home and reach of one's social affiliations, which may again be distinct from the actual physical location of home and reach (Rose, cited in Buttimer 1980:171). If all three are synchronized or harmonized "then one could speak of *centeredness* and hypothesize that one's sense of place is a function of how well it provides a center for one's life interests" (Buttimer 1980:171).

Once again, place is described in terms of particular qualities, the physical setting (location), the activities (social affiliations) and the meanings (thoughts and imagination) of a place. The coming together of these qualities (*genius loci* or centeredness) is then interpreted by one's sense of place. The difference in Buttimer's understanding is that the bonding to places is seen in the context of two reciprocal movements, with emphasis given to the place being a home.



The woman in this cartoon, by Michael Leunig, fails to consider the home of the man's imagination (1983).

Importance of Place

A permanent separation from one's home or place, in an imagined, physical and/or social sense; that is, to feel an outsideness, can be a traumatic experience. In antiquity exile was the worst of fates:

> In Euripides' play, Hippolytus, Theseus would not impose the death penalty on Hippolytus because swift death was regarded as too light a punishment for his heinous crime. Hippolytus had to drain the bitter dregs of his life as an exile on strange soil, this being the proper fate for the impious (Tuan 1977:154).

In today's highly mobile societies, exile is often self-imposed, yet can be a similarly debilitating experience. Godkin's study of alcoholics (1980) describes their confusion of self as often characterized by uprootedness; a sense of not belonging to place: "experiences supporting a sense and coherence of self are 'captured' and retained in memory partially as an image of the place where the positive experiences originally occurred" (1980:79).

The importance of attachments to place has been recognized in the psychiatric literature as significant in the development of self-identity (Godkin 1980:74). The philosopher Gaston Bachelard, in his Poetics of Space (1964), claimed that the relationship between place and personality is so intimate that to understand oneself a *topoanalysis,* the exploration of self through place, might yield more fruitful insights than psychoanalysis. Edith Cobb's study of the biographies of geniuses led her to the conclusion "that the terrain itself provided the gestalt upon which the intellect germinated" (cited in Shepard 1977:23).

Graham Rowles, in seeking authenticity for his experiential field work, gained the respect and friendship of elderly people in his neighbourhood over a number of years. He gradually came to realise that as the individuals aged and their actions became more constrained, there was an expanded "vicarious immersion in the places of the past" (1978:183). That is, as their physical mobility decreased, the importance of places experienced in the past became more significant.

With modern transportation systems, intimate contact with the physical surroundings is less frequent. "At the height of our technological mastery, we often find ourselves separated from both the earth and our own human being" (Seamon and Mugerauer 1985:1). People depend less on the community: the local networks of human concern that are closely bonded to places, have loosened. Consequently, fields of care have less significance.

Leunig depicts the importance some places retain even though the physical nature of the place may have changed (1983).

Universal religions give people a certain freedom from places, whereas local gods bind people to places. Meaningful celebrations, that are tinged with religious sentiment and tied to localities, indicate a respect for place. David Wilson, writing of a local community's outrage at being selected as the worst place to live in America, suggests that to sense the spirit, or what he terms 'presence', of a place "a response more akin to worship may be required" (1989:27). The importance of recognising places is neatly summarised by Alan Gussow.

> There is a great deal of talk these days about saving the environment. We must, for the environment sustains our

> bodies. But as humans we also require support for our spirits, and this is what certain kinds of places provide (Gussow, cited in Devall and Sessions 1985:111).

Understanding Place

Even though place is a profound and complex aspect of peoples' experiences of the world, there was little examination of the concept explicitly until the 1960's (Relph 1976:2). It is interesting to note that much of the literature reviewed in this chapter originates from American geographers. This may be because in other cultures the destruction of places is not as evident, or that the physical aspect of place is given less emphasis. David Sopher, investigating the experience of place in India, found that "place is constituted almost entirely by its social relations" (1986:2).

One can perhaps draw a parallel between place and wilderness. The wildness of the American continent dwindled as a result of the rapid rural immigration of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As its scarcity became apparent, calls for the conservation and preservation of wilderness became louder. Similarly, the destruction of unique or vernacular places as a result of "world wide blenderizing . . . converting the globe, piece by piece, into a business network of uniform parts and identical places" (Shepard 1977:22) has prompted studies of place, and calls for place conservation.[5]

To understand place in its fullest meaning, one must remain open in seeing and thinking. To see a place involves more than simply looking: 'I see' implies an understanding. Relph alludes to openness in his notion of *authenticity* which connotes that which is genuine, unadulterated and honest to itself:

> An authentic attitude to place . . . comes from a full awareness of places for what they are . . . not mediated and distorted through a series of quite arbitrary social and intellectual fashions about how that experience should be, nor following stereotyped conventions (1976:64).

A consequence of not developing an authentic sense of place may be

placelessness which is indicated by an ". . . underlying attitude which does not acknowledge significance in places" (Relph 1976:143). The essence of a place is lost when the meanings inherent in the place are ignored; place becomes a geometrical space.

Sense of Place in Summary

"A sense of place is basic to civilization: all the great cities of the world have been places that were intensely and minutely loved" (Seddon 1972:20). A deep, emotional relationship develops between people and places they have experienced:

> This association seems to constitute a vital source of both individual and cultural identity and security, a point of departure from which we orientate ourselves in the world (Relph 1976:43).

A sense of place, on any level, is one of the essential elements of our taken-for-granted life-world that brings meaning to our own existence: "place is, after all, not merely a geographical entity, it is also the most accurate image of what we imagine our own selves to be" (Catalano 1985:9).

Articulating what one senses, the quality of a feeling or aesthetic response is difficult. People tend to suppress what they cannot express, even if they know a place intimately.

> Literature and art induce an awareness of place by holding up mirrors to our own experience; what had been felt can now be seen, what was formless and vacillating is now framed and still (Tuan 1975:153).

This study will describe historic and contemporary attitudes expressed by people about Mount Wellington and, by disclosing these relationships, lead to an understanding of the significance The Mountain plays in peoples' sense of place. Because of their very nature, mountains engender a certain significance. This will be explored in the next chapter.

Endnotes

[1] Kevin Lynch defines imageability as "that shape, colour or arrangement which facilitates the making of vividly identified, powerfully structured, highly useful mental images of the environment" (cited in Norberg-Schulz 1980:19).

[2] An expression used by Kahn to describe the range of moods that light offers from morning to night, from day to day, from season to season and all through the years (cited in Norberg-Schulz 1980:190).

[3] The researcher explains:

> When I told Kenge that the insects were buffalo, he roared with laughter and told me not to tell such stupid lies. When Henri, who was thoroughly puzzled, told him the same thing, and explained that visitors to the park had to have a guide with them at all times because there were so many dangerous animals, Kenge still didn't believe but strained his eyes to see more clearly and asked what kind of buffalo they were that they were so small. I told him that they were sometimes nearly twice the size of a forest buffalo, and he shrugged his shoulders and said he would not be standing out there in the open if they were. I tried telling him they were possibly as far away as from Epulu to the village of Kopu, beyond Eboyo. He began scraping the mud off his arms and legs, no longer interested in such fantasies (Turnbull, cited in Tuan 1974a:80).

[4] These are described (Relph 1976:51-55):

> *Existential Outsideness* involves a selfconscious and reflective uninvolvement, an alienation from people and places, homelessness and of not belonging.
> *Objective Outsideness* is the intentional dispassionate attitude towards places in order to consider them selectively in terms of their locations or as spaces where objects and activities are located.
> *Incidental Outsideness* describes a largely unselfconscious attitude, compared with the intellectual intent of objective outsideness, in which places are experienced as little more than the background or setting for activities and are quite incidental to these activities.
> *Vicarious Insideness* is to experience places in a secondhand or vicarious way, that is, without actually visiting them, yet feel a deep involvement. For example artists or poets in depicting a place can convey something of what it is to live there, to give a sense of place, particularly if that place corresponds with what the observer or reader has experienced.
> *Behavioural Insideness* consists of being in a place and seeing it as a set of objects, views and activities arranged in certain ways and having certain observable qualities.
> *Empathetic Insideness* involves a deliberate effort of perception to understand a place, to which the person may be an outsider, and through openness and empathy come to recognise its essential patterns and meanings. There is a fading from the concern with the qualities of appearance, as in behavioural insideness, to emotional and empathetic involvement in place.
> *Existential Insideness*, the most fundamental form of insideness that is the very foundation of the place concept, in which a place is experienced without deliberate and selfconscious reflection yet is full with significances. This is an experience most people know when they are in their own community or region.

[5] Increasing calls for the preservation of historic sites, "a process whose self-stated goal is to maintain a traditional sense of place" (Datel and Dingemans 1984:135), are indicative of this.

CHAPTER 2

The Essence of Mountains

Mountains have been places of significance for many people. In particular, mythologies and religions have often adopted mountains, symbolically and/or physically, as meeting places between humans and the gods:

> In the mythic tradition the mountain is the bond between Earth and Sky. Its solitary summit reaches the sphere of eternity and its base spreads out in manifold foothills into the world of mortals (Daumal 1952:32).

This chapter will explore the essential nature of mountains and how people have related to them. In describing mountains, I will draw upon Martin Heidegger's philosophy, particularly his notions of 'sparing' and 'the fourfold'.

Heidegger's Notion of Dwelling

Heidegger ". . . basically holds to one and the same thought, the thought of Being" (Vycinas 1961:3). *Being* is a recognition of peoples' fragility and participation in a universe of meaning (Seamon 1984b:43). The very heart of human essence is existence; that is, relation to being, and "all the acts of man . . . are only his responses to Being" (Vycinas 1961:3). Heidegger uses the example of a cabinet-maker and his knowledge of the idiosyncrasies of wood to illustrate that the way to explore the world is to let things be, and allow them to respond as they are, without, for instance, the predefinition or manipulation to establish cause and effect which is characteristic of conventional study (Heidegger 1977a:355).

The revelation of things as they are in themselves is called *disclosure* (Vycinas 1961:75), which is the way to discover Being. "In disclosure, the thinker does not separate himself from the thing but strives to meet it with an attitude of empathy and openness" (Seamon 1984b:44). Dwelling is a style of disclosure. "As human beings, we cannot fail to dwell, for dwelling,

ultimately, is the essential existential core of human being-in-the-world from which there is no escape" (Seamon 1984b:45). By approaching the concept of dwelling the phenomenon of Being is revealed in one particular aspect.

"*The fundamental character of dwelling is . . . sparing.* It pervades dwelling in its whole range" (Heidegger 1977b:327). Sparing indicates having an eye for the way the thing 'essentiates' in the world. Sparing lets things be the way they are. *Things,* as referred to by Heidegger, can be the things of nature, such as stones or wood, or things of usage, such as utensils. He sees in the very 'thingness' of a thing the assembling of the world; that is, the interplay of the fourfold. To illustrate this, Heidegger describes a ewer (a pitcher). The essence of a ewer consists in the outpour of a flow of liquid, for example water:

> In outpoured water sojourns[1] the spring. In the springwater sojourns stone and in stone the dark slumber of the earth which receives the rains and dew of the sky. In springwater the nuptials of earth and sky sojourn . . . But the outpour of a gush is the ewerness of a ewer. In the essence of a ewer sojourn the earth and the sky (Heidegger, cited in Vycinas 1961:247).

The mortals quench their thirst by the gush of the ewer, and on feast days the outpouring is a devotion to the gods. In the word 'gush' Heidegger indicates the remnants of the word 'sacrifice' (Vycinas 1961:248).

Thus a 'non-systematic' description of a thing, when allowed to appear as it is, assembles the fourfold; earth, sky, mortals and the gods. In contrast a thing approached 'systematically', through scientific investigation for example, is overpowered by the system and does not show its true face, but instead that which the system identifies as thing. When a thing is allowed to be the way it is, it is the assembler of the world. To spare a thing is to spare the fourfold. Heidegger's dwelling involves the sparing of things and hence an openness to the fourfold, to being-in-the-world.

The Fourfold

The earth appears in diverse colours, forms and tones, "it is that which constructively supports; cherishingly bears fruits; preserves water and rocks, plants and animals" (Heidegger, cited in Vycinas 1961:226). However the earth appears as that which keeps itself veiled, while it unveils all the forms, colours and tones: "the shutting-itself-off of the earth, however, is no uniform, rigid remaining-veiled, but it unfolds itself in an inexhaustible fullness of the simple modes and shapes" (Heidegger, cited in Vycinas 1961:14). Through artwork, Heidegger suggests, the earth projects itself into the openness of a world: "the standing [Greek] temple opens up a world and sets it at the same time back upon the earth which itself thus comes forward as the native ground" (Heidegger, cited in Vycinas 1961:162).

The sky is characterized by the sun, moon, stars, seasons of the year, days, nights, winds and clouds. This seemingly poetic interpretation of Heidegger's is in stark contrast to scientific investigation. Vycinas explains this with reference to thunder (1961:227). The thunder of the sky causes fear, astonishment or an experience of humanity-exceeding powers. By scientific explanation, the phenomenon of thunder is given over to theoretical control, further supplemented by physical control when the construction of a device takes away the danger of being struck by lightning. At the same time as being released from exposure to the elements of the sky, humans are also released from being exposed to Being. Not that the erection of lightning conductors is wrong, but:

> it is wrong to replace the openness to essences by scientific explanations of them and thus to let our spiritual sight be stunted at the point of controlling nature and to remain blind to the essences which are beyond this point (Vycinas 1961:227).

The sparing of earth and sky means letting all the things on the earth and in the sky be the way they are in themselves. Earth and sky themselves represent an order which holds sway over the things. The earth and sky, when allowed to be the way they are, embody a sense of spiritual reverence,

or 'the gods'. The gods are the powers of Being:

> Gods are the bearers of this rule [Being] to everything which is or to everything which sojourns . . . gods in their essences are totally different, and thus incomparable to that which sojourns (Vycinas 1961:227).

However, Being needs humans to bring itself into being. Being is not thinkable without its approach towards humans or withdrawal from them (Vycinas 1961:229). Thus earth, sky and gods necessarily refer to mortals. Heidegger indicates humans as mortals since humans imply death: "dying is not an experience which takes place when we are about to die or expire as living beings: our way of being itself is dying" (Vycinas 1961:229). If humans lived in the constancy of day, they would know neither night *nor* day. Similarly in order to know what a being *is*, it is necessary to stand beyond that which is, to stand in that which is not. This standing out into nothingness is the extreme possibility of being-in-the-world, which is death; "as the shrine of Nothing, death is the shelter [secures the 'essentiation'] of Being" (Heidegger 1975a:179). Humans are, in *essence*, mortal.

Earth, sky, gods and mortals necessarily belong together: "each of the four mirrors in its own way the presence of the others. Each therewith reflects itself in its own way into its own, within the simpleness of the four" (Heidegger 1975a:179). This mirror-play of the fourfold is assembled by mountains.

Why Look Skywards?

"The mountains are a passive mystery, the oldest of all" (Dillard 1974:13). To justify that there is an innate attachment to mountains in the human psyche is fraught with the flaws of making broad generalizations about distant cultures and epochs, generalizations that then become inextricably meshed with the influences of the present day. However, keeping this in mind, a number of inherent human perceptions will be suggested to support the idea that the topophilia of mountains rests on some common ground; that mountains are, because of their nature, open to the recognition

of the assembling of the fourfold.

Mountains are things of immensity and permanence. They are born from the earth and grow over time, outstanding on a horizon, thrown forward from the surrounds. So too, do they wither and die and become reconciled to less obtrusive being, their mask of immensity lost in a rubble indiscernible from the neighbouring hills. This life-cycle is hardly recognizable to human perceptions. Very few humans, even cultures, witness the birth or death of a mountain. They are perceived as stable objects, permanent fixtures in people's taken-for-granted worlds. The topophilia of mountains emerges as a response to the space created by them. Since mountains remain unyielding to linear time on a human scale, this response, to an unchanging space, may be considered innate within humans.

What is inherent in humans' perceptions of space; what is the nature of humans' original space? Humans are constantly submerged in a sensing of space that engenders certain feelings: "body implicates space: space coexists with the sentient body" (Tuan 1974b:214). Tuan suggests that sense perceptions and early human experience account for archetypal tastes. Jellicoe goes as far as to say:

> the response of biological man to an artificial hill made today in England out of waste is probably identical with the response to such a hill made in ancient China, no matter how different the environment (Jellicoe 1987:7).

Tuan describes this response more analytically (1974b). Humans are more sensitive to horizontal and vertical lines than oblique lines, and more responsive to right angles and symmetrical shapes than to acute, obtuse or irregular shapes. In modern English language, values are attached to space. For example high and low, looking up in awe or down in contempt: "to go up is to rise above our earth bound origin to the sky which is either the abode of or identical with the supreme being" (Tuan 1974b:220). Horizontal space is secular since it is accessible to the senses, vertical space is

symbolized, for example as Heaven and Hades.

Vertical elements are also stable cues for orientation and may become identifiers of a place. The phenomenon of gravity means that motion upwards is most difficult. Human partiality for the vertical, and its symbolization, is manifest in many ancient cosmologies. Throughout the prehistoric world, "the simple heaped mound, emulating a hill and silhouetted against the sky was the almost universal record of a burial" (Jellicoe 1987:16). The height of a burial mound in Nordic society was indicative of the importance of the person.

The Sumerians lived on the endless plains of the Tigris-Euphrates basin. They constructed ziggurats, artificial 'Hills of Heaven', on the top of which lived a god (Jellicoe 1987:23). To be closer to the sky was to communicate with the gods. The Egyptian pyramids represented the primordial hillock; "after the annual flood of the Nile begins to sink down, the first hillock is symbolic of the reborn world" (Campbell 1988:29). Founded on the four cardinal points each side came together at the top and "there the eye of God opens" (Campbell 1988:25).

Tuan, in his review of cosmological schemata, found "the multivarious elements of the cosmos are mediated by the centre" (1974a:20), the centre often implying the vertical. In Rabbinical literature, Israel is perceived to rise higher above sea level than any other land and Temple Hill is taken to be the highest point in Israel (Tuan 1974b:223). Mount Kailas on the Tibetan Plateau is considered the home of Shiva and often associated with the mythical Mount Meru, the centre of the world for Hindus and Buddhists (Matthiessen 1989:177).

The vertical also gave societies a natural defence; to be 'above' was safe. High vantage points were also used for signalling purposes from ancient times to the eighteenth century, when they were superseded by semaphore telegraphy (Pennick 1979:27). Mountain peaks may be an environmental

need inherited from our ancestors because they are favourably endowed in the symbolism of prospect (Appleton, cited in Lowenthal 1978:381). More recently societies have used the vertical to inspire awe and a sense of wonderment. Gothic cathedrals, spires, towers, pagodas and even modern skyscrapers manifest this within architecture.

Vertical dimensions are symbolized in terms of transcendence and skyward spirituality: "vertical elements in the landscape evoke a sense of striving, a defiance of gravity" (Tuan 1974a:28). Heidegger notes that "the path leading to that which is nearest to us men is always the most distant and therefore the most difficult" (Heidegger, cited in Vycinas 1961:20) What is nearest is Being but what is most distant is the gods. Mountains reach for the heavens, the gods, and evoke a sense of striving. Climbing a mountain is thus symbolic of a striving for Being along the most difficult path, in defiance of gravity, which leads to the distant gods.

Mountains and The Fourfold

Almost every religion has its own holy mountain and instances of heroes or religious leaders ascending them in order to communicate with the gods. Annie Dillard queries this: "I have never understood why so many mystics of all creeds experience the presence of Gods on mountain-tops. Aren't they afraid of being blown away?" (1974:89). What Dillard overlooks is the physiology of ascending a mountain. The physical act of climbing a mountain generates an increased heartbeat and deeper breathing which, combined with the change of scale of the world when viewed from the top, produces fresh awareness and possibly a state of euphoria.

Mountains influence the human physique, even to the point of sickness and death, which in the prehistoric era may have been interpreted as the wrath of gods for transgressing on hallowed ground. In these times mountains were frequently linked in legend with the origin of a tribe or spirit. Often offerings would be made to the gods of the mountains as protection against disease and to ensure good crops. This belief in the

holiness of mountain places was carried into the written traditions of the West.

The Old Testament makes many references to mountains, usually as objects of veneration and symbols of strength and peace. It was to the mountains that prophets looked to receive the word of God: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help" (Psalms 121:1). Moses received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. In the King James version of the Bible this is described thus: "and Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him *out* of the mountain . . ." (Exodus 19:3, my emphasis). In the New Testament mountains remain symbolic of a meeting place with God, but Jesus' retreats to the mountains are stated merely as fact; no comment is made of the beauty, strength or peace of the mountains as in the Old Testament (Price 1981:11).

This dualism is also implicit in the differing attitudes of Greeks and Romans to mountains. The ideal siting of early Greek temples included an enclosed valley in which the palace was built, a conical hill to the north or south of the palace, and a higher double-peaked mountain located some distance beyond the hill (Scully 1962:47). Romans made regular crossings of the Alps and appeased the deities of the Alpine passes by making offerings of coins and small bronze tablets inscribed with the names of the deity and the traveller, however in general their attitude was one of indifference to mountains (Price 1981:13).

Mary Nicolson interprets mountain attitudes in terms of mountain gloom or mountain glory. In her opinion the Old Testament and Greeks exhibited mountain glory, whilst the New Testament and Romans, mountain gloom (1963:42). It is the latter that was the dominant influence upon Western thinking up to the Romantic period, whereafter attitudes became more consistent with the former. Nicolson believes that "we see in nature what we have been taught to look for, we feel what we have been prepared to feel" (1963:1).

Heidegger's notion of dwelling is developed from an attitude of empathy towards things, a letting of things be. It is concerned with how a thing essentiates in the world. Notions of good or bad are irrelevant to the essence of a thing and its assembling of the fourfold. Whether attitudes towards mountains have been of glory or gloom, mountains have still remained symbolic of the meeting place of humans and the gods, an evocation of Being. The essence of a mountain transcends 'what we have been taught to look for' or 'what we have been prepared to feel'. These may only hinder an ability to see (in the sense of sparing), just as a systematic approach overpowers the thing by the system.

Medieval Europe was doused in mountain gloom according to Nicolson (1963:42). She suggests that the New Testament implicitly denigrates mountains; what was high and rich was suspect, whereas what was low and humble was worthy (Matthew 5:3-11), whilst in the 'words of Esaias the prophet', "every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight and the rough ways shall be made smooth" (Luke 3:5). Nicolson believes this partly accounts for the revulsion against mountains at this time.

It was not that mountains became godless, but that their asymmetry and roughness was indicative of the fall of humans from God's grace. The openness to personal experience, to disclosure, was shadowed by theological moralizing and the systematic description of things based on symmetry and smoothness. The poet, Petrarch, ascended Mount Ventoux in 1335, of his own volition, and delighted in its grandeur and majesty. However on reading Aquinas' Confessions, he chastised himself for admiring "things of the earth, instead of remembering that the human soul is beyond comparison the subject of admiration" (Petrarch, cited in Nicolson 1963:50).

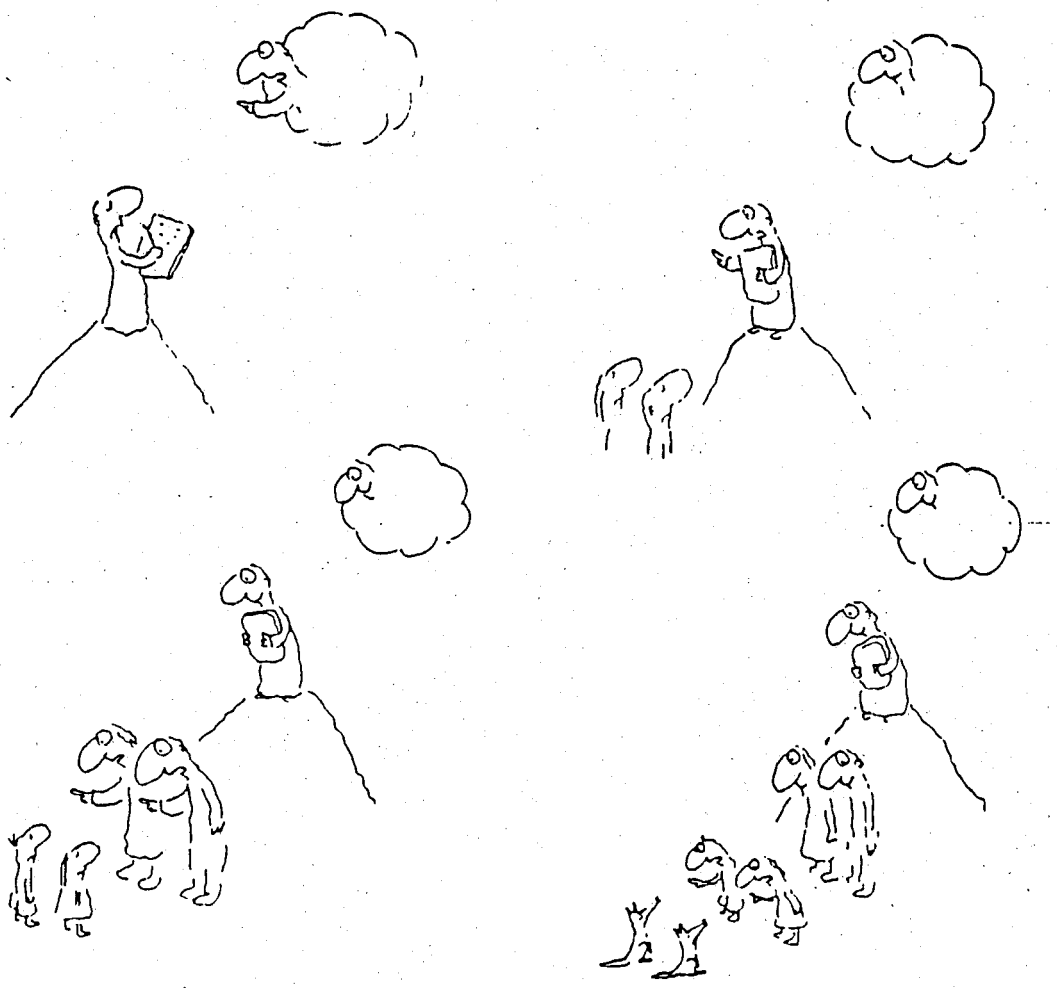
Thomas Burnet's, The Sacred Theory of the Earth (1681), also reflects this conflict. He describes an openness to mountains:

> . . . there is nothing that I look upon with more pleasure than

> the wide sea and the mountains of the earth. There is something august and stately in the air of these things, that inspires the mind with great thoughts and passions; we do naturally, upon such occasions think of God and his greatness . . . they fill and overbear the mind with their excess, and cast it into a pleasing kind of stupor and admiration (Burnet, cited in Nicolson 1963:213).

Yet at the same time Burnet believed himself to be an apostle of the current theological teachings of decorum and proportion:

> . . . although we justly admire its [the mountain's] greatness, we cannot at all admire its beauty or elegancy for 'tis as deformed and irregular as it is great (Burnet, cited in Nicolson 1963:215).



Leunig's interpretation of God's word being received on a mountain (1985).

A sense of vastness, a sense of godliness[2] gathered from mountains, still soaked through the clergy's teachings even though Burnet's thoughts were of a time when mountains were the 'warts, wens, blisters and imposthumes' of the earth's surface.

One of the first to express an unrestrained openness for mountains after the medieval period was Conrad Gesneer in a letter he wrote in 1541:

> For how great a pleasure, think you, is it, how great delight for a man touched as he ought to be, to wonder at the mass of the mountains as one gazes on their vastness, and to lift up one's head as it were amongst the clouds? The understanding is deeply moved, I know not wherefore, by their amazing height, and is driven to think of the Great Architect who made them (cited in Price 1981:16).

It is an openness to the vastness of the mountain, the earth and its merging with the sky that brings about a deeper understanding, and an experiencing of godliness; a coming together of the fourfold.

This heralds the emergence of the Romantics, whose open attitudes towards nature suggest sparing and disclosure.

> The immeasureable height
> Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
> The stationary blasts of waterfalls,
> And in the narrow rent at every turn
>
> Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and forlorn,
> The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,
> Black drizzling crags that spake by the way-side
> As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
> And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
> The unfettered clouds and regions of the Heavens,
> Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light-
> Were all workings of one mind, the features
> Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree;
> Characters of the great Apocalypse,
> The types and symbols of Eternity,
> Of first, and last, and midst, and without end
> (Wordsworth, cited in Nicolson 1963:393).

Wordsworth's heightened environmental encounter, his sparing of the

mountain, brings together the fourfold, the spiritual reverence described as "the types and symbols of Eternity". Elsewhere in his writings, Wordsworth also calls this experience "the mysteries of Being" or "authentic tidings of invisible things" (Wordsworth, cited in Seamon 1984c:767). This experience "is not a word; it is a helpless gasp, a catch of breath" (Roszak 1973:321). The Romantics, by turning to the open experience of nature had broken into a new world; "the pleasure man felt in mountains . . . lay in the enlargement of the soul to experience more completely the powers, desires and aspirations given by its great Original, the true Infinite" (Nicolson 1963:321).

These experiences echo the ideas of some Eastern religions. The early Japanese took it for granted that the natural world was the original world (Kitagawa 1987:45). Shinto, the way of the *kami*, has as its basic affirmation the sacrality of the total world, which is permeated by the *kami* (sacred) nature. The *kami* not only dwelled in mountains but mountains were often thought of as the *kami* themselves[3]:

> Lo! There towers the lofty peak of Fuji
> From between Kai and wave washed Saruge.
> The clouds of heaven dare not cross it,
> Nor the birds of the air soar above it.
> The snows quench the burning fires,
> The fires consume the falling snow.
> It baffles the tongue, it cannot be named,
> It is a [*kami*] mysterious
> (The Manyoshu[4], cited in Kitagawa 1987:46).

Shinto pilgrimages emphasized ascetic and physical discipline implying a soteriological path based on self-power. Sacred mountains were particularly suited to such journeys because of their size, whilst the notion that these mountains were models of Paradise gave strong impetus to the pilgrims to seek the religious meaning of life within the realm of phenomenal existence (Kitagawa 1987:135).

Chinese religious practices "revolve around the interrelationship and mutual affectivity of what Heidegger calls the fourfold neighborhood of earth, sky, diffinities and mortals" (Chen 1989:x). Pilgrimages to the sacred

mountains are an important part of these practices. The Tao Te Ching regards the earth as the abode of Tao, and "harps on the need to return to and become rooted in Tao" (Chen 1989:x). Taoists may seek out mountains from where they may experience a return to the Tao, "the transpersonal, creative and wonderfully transformative power governing all beings in the universe" (Chen 1989:17).

A contemporary illustration of the level of awareness attained by climbing 'mountains' (Leunig 1983).

Modern-day enthusiasts for mountains often speak with an openness that is akin to sparing of mountains. Rockclimbing allows mortals to clutch at mountains[5], in defiance of death. "The mountains had been a natural field

of activity, where playing on the frontiers of life and death, we had found the freedom for which we were blindly groping and which was as necessary to us as breath" (Matthiessen 1989:110). Death can be a forming factor for our existence when it remains a possibility (Vycinas 1961:57). A heightened sense of death may increase the awareness of Being and openness to the gods. "The true mountaineer is not a mere gymnast, but a man who worships the mountains" (Strutfield, cited in Price 1981:22). For the rockclimber the mountain assembles the fourfold, bringing together the earth and sky, the rockclimber as mortal in the face of death, and finding freedom, 'as necessary as breath', in the gods.

The essence of a mountain is found in its vertical immensity; "immense is not an object . . . immensity is within ourselves . . . immensity is the movement of motionless man" (Bachelard 1964:134). What is the 'movement of motionless man'? It is found in the stillness and reverence that results in an openness, in a sparing of things and hence disclosure. Sparing is implicated in the very essence of a mountain, thus by *seeing* a mountain as it essentiates in the world, this necessarily evokes disclosure.

Thinking Like A Mountain

For deep ecologists the intuitions of organic wholeness, the appreciation of nonhuman self, may come from experiential understanding of 'mountain actualizing' (Devall and Sessions 1985:112). Leopold's phrase, 'thinking like a mountain' evokes disclosure. Leopold uses 'mountain thinking' to explore the essence of a wolf's howl:

> Every living thing (and perhaps many a dead one as well) pays heed to that call. To the deer it is a reminder of the way of the flesh, to the pine a forecast of midnight scuffles and of blood upon the snow . . . to the hunter a challenge of fang against bullet. Even without sight or sound of wolf, it is implicit in a hundred small events: the midnight whinny of a pack horse, the rattle of rolling rocks, the bound of a fleeing deer, the way shadows lie under the spruces. Yet behind these obvious and immediate hopes and fears there lies a deeper meaning, known only to the mountain itself. Only the mountain has lived long enough to listen objectively

> to the howl of a wolf (Leopold 1949:129).

Leopold's description calls together the earth (deer, pine, spruces, rocks), the sky (midnight, snow, shadows) and mortals (hunters facing the possibility of death from the fang). Only the mountain knows the essence of the wolf's howl. Thinking like a mountain is to be open to the gods, the bearers of being, thus bringing together the fourfold.

Thinking like a mountain in the study of mountains is described by Dogen:

> As for mountains, there are mountains hidden in jewels; there are mountains hidden in marshes, mountains hidden in the sky; there are mountains hidden in mountains. There is a study of mountains hidden in hiddenness. An ancient Buddha said, "Mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers." The meaning of these words is not that mountains are mountains, but that mountains are mountains. Therefore, we should thoroughly study these mountains. When we thoroughly study the mountains, this is mountain training. Such mountains and rivers themselves spontaneously become wise men and sages (Dogen, cited in Devall and Sessions 1985:113).

This transformation of mountains into wise men by mountain training is comparable with Heidegger's authentic thinking of things. He writes that by thinking a thing in a proper way humans become determined by it and thus they abandon their indeterminateness, their isolation in their subjectivity and become the guardians of world and things (Heidegger 1975a:181).

Peter Matthiessen, on his search for the snow leopard in the Himalayas, often meditated on mountains. Early in the journey he felt "the secret of the mountains is that the mountains simply exist, as I do myself: the mountains exist simply, which I do not. The mountains have no 'meaning', they *are* meaning; the mountains *are*" (1989:195). After much mountain training, Matthiessen meditates:

> . . . for the last time on this mountain that is bare, though others all around are white with snow. Like the bare peak of the *koan*[6], this one is not different from myself. I know this mountain because I am this mountain (1989:235).

The notion of learning from a mountain is also expressed by Laurens van der Post:

> I had no preconceived ideas about the mountain myself. I had never seen it, and the only plan I had was to go and live with the mountain for a while and let its nature impose its own plan, if any, on me (van der Post 1952:98).

This willingness to *see* a mountain in an open manner without preconceptions may be contrasted with the experience of Peter Conrad. For twenty years he lived under a mountain but journeyed up it only once. His "childhood was overshadowed by a brutal, bad-tempered eminence: a mountain" (1988:30). After two brief trips to the summit twenty years later, incarcerated in a vehicle, Conrad believed he could "see now why those who live under Mount Wellington don't come up it: its lesson is disillusionment" (1988:35). Perhaps this is precisely one of the reasons why people do climb mountains, to dissolve illusions and be open to authentic thinking. Conrad remained closed to the mountain : "its unstable temper means you can never know it, or even feel confident that you are seeing it properly . . . it was a wall I must try to look over, if I were ever to understand where I came from" (1988:37).

Mountain Reflections

Examples of heightened environmental encounters give clues as to how Heidegger's notions of sparing and dwelling might be actualized concretely (Seamon 1984c:769). Mountains provide many examples of these experiences because of their nature and the innate attraction that humans have to places with height and visibility. As a thing, the mountain assembles the fourfold when it appears as it is. The sparing of mountains has been an aspect of some cultures that is indicative of their more general attitude of respect for the natural world.

It is interesting to compare Heidegger's notion of the fourfold with the essential qualities of place discussed in chapter one. The earth and the sky are predominant when viewing the physical setting of a mountain, mortals

illustrate the sparing of a mountain most obviously by the type of activities they pursue on it and a sense of godliness or spiritual reverence may be indicated by the particular significance a mountain has for people. These broad relationships will form the basis of my investigation of Mount Wellington discussed in the following chapters.

Endnotes

[1] 'Sojourn' is used by Heidegger to express the dynamic character of Being. Being is never sealed into itself, but is constantly coming out of itself into revelation or openness. This coming out of Being from concealment into revelation gives birth to time; it *is* time. . . time is Being's coming to openness (Vycinas 1961:3).

[2] The sense of godliness is different to a sense of God in the biblical sense. It refers to Heidegger's fourfold; when the earth and sky are allowed to be the way they are they embody a sense of spiritual reverence or godliness, although this does not necessary preclude the description of such reverence in terms of the biblical God. Heidegger does not encounter God in the Christian sense: "Faith has no room in thinking" (Heidegger, in Vycinas 1961:314). Thus the sense of godliness is that which can be experienced. It is interesting to note that Burnet's thesis was an attempt to prove that science and scripture could complement each other. Just as scientific investigation may not allow a thing to be seen as it is, so too can scripture overpower a thing by its dogma.

[3] Compare this with Exodus 19, when the Lord came down upon the mountain and also spoke to Moses out of the mountain.

[4] The Manyoshu (collection of myriad leaves) is an anthology of ancient Shinto verse (Kitagawa 1987:46).

[5] 'To clutch the mountain' was a euphemism in Assyrian that signified 'to die' (Matthiesen 1989:124).

[6] A *koan* is a Zen paradox, not to be solved by intellect, that may bring about a sudden dissolution of logical thought and clear the way for direct *seeing* into the heart of existence. The koan was: "All the peaks are covered with snow- why is this one bare?" (Matthiessen 1989:125). Compare direct *seeing* with Heidegger's sparing; "sparing indicates having an eye for the thing the way it 'essentiates in the world" (Vycinas 1961:18).

CHAPTER 3

Approaching The Mountain[1]

The setting of Hobart has attracted a range of superlatives from residents and visitors alike. Whether one's approach is from the north, south or east, by air, water or overland, The Mountain looms large in varied poses. As Conrad observes, "Hobart belongs to Mount Wellington" (1988:30). On approaching the city in 1844, Louisa Meredith, who wrote and illustrated books about Tasmanian nature, described the setting:

> . . . the most beautiful that can be conceived - on the rising banks of the noble Derwent, with green meadows, gardens, and cultivated land around it, interspersed with pleasant country residences and farms; and above and beyond all, the snowy mountain peaks soaring to the very clouds (Meredith 1979:8).

The initial approach into Hobart is often a person's first opportunity to gain a sense, not only of the city, but of Tasmania as well, and can have a lasting impression. "The great difference between Sydney and Hobarton struck me as forcibly during my first ten minutes walk as after a long acquaintance" (Meredith 1979:8). Although Meredith's preference for Hobart was won by "its homelike English aspect" (1979:8), The Mountain was of considerable influence:

> . . . from every point I visited, Mount Wellington forms the crowning glory of the landscape . . . its aspect is one of ever varying, but never decreasing grandeur. Whether it was wreathed in fleecy vapours, dark with rolling clouds, or stood out clear and sunlit against the blue morning sky, I was never weary of gazing on this magnificent object (1979:9).

The Conservator of Forests, George Perrin wrote of The Mountain's persuasive presence:

> Hobart . . . is famed all over the world for the natural beauty of its surrounds; and I think I may safely say Mount Wellington - its timbered slopes and gullies - occupy a leading if not the chief position among such surroundings . . . (1887:3).

Tuan emphasises the significance of stable objects in defining a place (1977:161). As people sense a scene, each pause of vision at a point of interest creates an image of place, an identifier that remains in their memory. The Mountain is a significant landmark overlooking Hobart and its physical presence becomes an unmistakable identifier of Hobart:

> When we approach a settlement, the skyline is usually of decisive importance. What we perceive is a figure which rises from the ground towards the sky in a certain way. It is this standing and rising which determines our expectations and tells us where we are (Norberg-Schulz 1985:33).

One can approach The Mountain from various directions and by means of various modes of transport. In this chapter I will consider perceptions of The Mountain's figure from the most common approaches to emphasise the differing nature of The Mountain's physical setting. I will also consider how The Mountain's physical setting has been perceived by artists[2] and what characteristics they have sought to emphasise.

From the Water

From a boat on the Derwent River, John Mitchel, an Irish political convict, had time to reflect:

> We are becalmed in the channel; but can see the huge mass of Mount Wellington, ending to the eastward in steep cliffs . . . So I have time to dwell upon, to appropriate and assimilate, one of the loveliest scenes in all the world . . . Hobart Town has quite an imposing appearance from the water standing out against its grand mountain background (1988:33).

Viewed from the River one feels part of The Mountain's rising; a fluid feeling that the water discloses. Numerically The Mountain's height is described as one thousand, two hundred and seventy metres, but this fails to convey the emotional impact of The Mountain's standing and rising, from sea to sky, exaggerating its presence. Indeed, without the advantage of instruments, the first deputy-surveyor of Tasmania, G.P.R. Harris estimated The Mountain to be about "1 mile perpendicular height"[3] (cited in de Quincey 1987:23).

Until commercial air travel commenced the common approach to Hobart was up the Derwent River, often after a stormy passage. Under sail one feels the turbulent water and hears the wind in the sails which confirm one's movement past changing landmarks. The Mountain's presence communicates the stillness of earth, of the journey's end, anticipating the step from flowing water to solid ground. For the returning resident The Mountain stands as "the monument which he greets with raised hat when his vessel rounds the rocky wall of Tasman Island . . . it calls to him the memory of those who sleep beneath" (Hobart Tourist Bureau 1915:54).

For Lieutenant John Hayes, sailing up the river in 1793, the scene engendered associations with his birthplace, Derwentwater in Cumberland, and he thus called the river Derwent, and the mountain Skiddaw, after similar features in the Derwentwater landscape. Such associative naming was ". . . a fundamental mechanism of psychological transition and accommodation at the very centre of Tasmania's immigrant culture" (Dixon 1987:138). The strange and, to some, frightening landscape could in a sense be made more habitable by transplanting familiar names. In 1804, Governor Collins officially named it the Table Mountain and later, probably in 1821 during Governor Macquarie's second tour of the colony, it was renamed Mount Wellington, after the hero of the day, The Duke of Wellington.

Unfortunately the meanings of the Aborigine's names for The Mountain, recorded as 'unghanyahletta' and 'pooraneteré' (Roth, cited in de Quincey 1987:3), are unknown and one can only but wonder whether they more imaginatively reflect its particular spirit.[4] According to geological dreaming, the dolerite cap which defines The Mountain's physical nature, intruded the Triassac sandstone one hundred and sixty-five million years ago. Sixty million years before the area was a flat shallow sea-floor. One allegoric description compared The Mountain:

> . . . to that of some monstrous plesiosaurus stretched out in sleep, the head and neck depressed leaning down towards the north, its

> back elevated near the shoulders, and its tail tapering down for miles in a southerly direction (Government Tourist Bureau 1916:11).

Perhaps this reflects The Mountain's geological origins; having risen from the water and formed in an era when dinosaurs roamed the earth, The Mountain now erodes and faults into its geological totem, an acquatic dinosaur.

From the Air

The modern day approach to Hobart is usually from the air. As the plane commences its descent from the clouds, The Mountain looks strangely tamed. Its vertical nature is subdued by the aerial perspective; the cliffs and valleys merge together as if one is looking down upon a miniature paper maché model. Only the city's lack of intrusive influence on the wooded slopes hints at The Mountain's dominance. When the plane banks in a steep arc over the waters of Frederick Henry Bay The Mountain looms larger in contrast with the hills of the Meehan Range in the foreground.

From the North

The Midlands Highway runs like a backbone, linking the North and South of Tasmania. Returning to Hobart, often at the end of the day, The Mountain reflects one's expectancy of home:

> I always enjoy a sense of elation, a feeling that home in Hobart is not far off, when, on travelling down from the North, the first sight of the mountain bursts into sudden view . . . on topping the crest of Spring Hill. This, one feels, is really the South, the mountain its permanent landmark ('Peregrine' 1972:6).

Peter Conrad sees The Mountain as something ferocious; "it lies along the sky like a crouched lion, its head rearing directly above Hobart" (1988:30). When approached from the North it loses its ferocity:

> Driving back to Hobart from the north, where the Derwent Valley is foreshortened and Mount Wellington, instead of the familiar leonine profile, compresses to an unrecognisable jumble of rocks, my mother asks hopefully 'Is that our mountain?' (Conrad 1988:31).

From the South

From the South, one usually approaches The Mountain with some trepidation; leaving the fresh country air of the south to lunge back into the city. One passes the Sleeping Beauty stretching out beside her castle, The Mountain. As you skirt her boundary, she slowly disappears into the foothills, and Cathedral Rock looms over the North-West Bay River valley. The mountain appears in a slumber itself, gently rising, the Organ Pipes hardly visible.

The imagining of Mount Wellington's neighbouring mountains as profiles facing skywards is similar to an Aboriginal legend, recorded by W.J. Cotton.[5] Moinee, a great god, and his wife Vena, slept with their faces turned to the heavens and beside them lay the figure of Culla-Minna, Mother of all Life: "Lying slightly north-west of Mt Wellington and seen plainly from the Eastern Shore are the faces of Moinee and Vena and north of them again is the figure of the Mother of all Life" (Cotton, cited in 'Peregrine' 1972:6)

From the East

The road from the airport is well travelled, particularly by anticipating tourists eager for their first glimpses of Hobart and its surrounds, or weary home-comers at their journey's end. I shared this journey recently with a mainland couple visiting Tasmania for the first time. Their holiday preparation had included delving over snapshots of Hobart in all its aspects. Now, from the noisy interior of a Red Line coach, they were to be transported into those very pictures and to become players in their dreams.

The flat and dry plains and shallow wetlands surrounding the airport provide few clues as to the proximity of the city. Familiar with flat-lands complete with suburban sprawl, the Melbournians enquire, "where are all the houses?". In fact if one's plane journey has been through masses of cloud, as indeed ours had on this occasion, the uninitiated may have similarly clouded mental maps of the area. Fortunately the clouds had

dissipated, and pointing to the distant glimpse of The Mountain-top, caught between two hills, I directed their attentions and answered "under The Mountain".

A moment later The Mountain had disappeared behind The Meehan Range[6] and we were left to talk about it only as it lay in our memories. It is not until one passes over (and partly through) the saddle next to Tunnel Hill that The Mountain appears again. This I anticipated as we sluiced through the twenty metre cutting, but for the visitors to emerge from this dimly yellow, sedimentary rock cutting, which foreshortens one's depth of field, and to be thrown into a panorama of distance and light, dotted with houses and capped by a mountain, it was a complete surprise. Guide books don't pre-empt this experience, which often makes it even more startling. With the whining of coach engines, stressed from a steep climb still ringing in their ears, they described loudly and excitably the scene.

The Mountain that seemed so distant had jumped forward in all its vastness, pushing before it clusters of coloured roofs and a gangling rake of valleys fanning around variously wooded hills. Its familiarity recalls a story of the peak Reani, the crowning point of the island of Tikopia in the South Pacific. For the seafaring islanders this peak is of importance for three reasons:

> First it enables the ocean rover to estimate how far he is from land and whether he is on course. Second it is an object of sentiment; the wanderer when he departs loses sight of the peak below the ocean waves in sorrow and when he returns greets its first appearance above the waves with joy. Third it is a sacred place: "it is there that the gods first stand when they come down" (Tuan 1977:158).

Topophilia towards one's homeland can be a strong emotional bond. Landmarks, such as Mount Wellington, that distinguish one's homeland become reflectors of these ties: "visible signs serve to enhance a person's sense of identity; they encourage awareness of place" (Tuan 1977:159).

The Mountain is a symbol of my home: to approach The Mountain is to arrive back home. Tuan suggests that because most people live in the cities and not in the mountains, the sentiment for mountains is weaker. To me the city of Hobart and Mount Wellington are indistinguishable; the two cannot be separated. On returning home my feelings of familiarity and ease, the assurance of nurture and security and thoughts of homely pleasures, are derived inwardly from memories of house and people, but outwardly are reflected by The Mountain. It is as if The Mountain has absorbed all that has been played out below and stands as a lighthouse, beaming it all back.

Depicting The Mountain

Artists' attitudes can have considerable influence over peoples' perceptions of the landscape; they have a significant role in conveying a sense of place. Peoples' relationships may be deepened or enriched by a portrayal of The Mountain which re-interprets their own experiences.

The early settlers of Hobart arrived with eyes that were intent on pioneering, minds that wandered back to their mother country and a language that evolved in response to a different landscape. Their ability to sense in an authentic manner was stifled by the foreign landscape:

> The English-trained eye had few starting points from which to work. The trees shed their bark instead of their leaves; the seasons were back-to-front, and the distinctions between them not clearly marked; the native animals were like mutations from a biologist's nightmare, and the soothing generalities of a diction based upon European nature were glaringly wrong (Matthews, cited in Magarey 1986:105).

For the English-trained eye The Mountain provided a starting point, particularly in the early nineteenth century when 'mountain glory' was the prevalent attitude. Brian Elliot's summary of landscape poetry in Australia[7] is applicable, in general, to the changing attitudes of painters and photographers. The review of artists' portrayals of The Mountain follows this general theme.

Painters[8]

Bernard Smith has written much on the colonial painters and suggests that whereas in Arthur Phillip's time "human progress was symbolised by the imposition of law and order upon the untamed wilderness", by 1850 "human progress comes to be spoken of as capacity to enjoy the unspoiled beauties of Australia in their sublime aspects" (cited in Roe 1983:5). The former concept of progress was evident in painters' attempts to achieve the picturesque by depicting the European's dominion over nature. The convict Joseph Lycett painted according to these sentiments and in an 1824 publication accompanying his paintings he wrote:

> . . . if we turn from the wild scenery of Australia in her pristine state, to view the benign changes which the arts and sciences of Britain, aided by the liberal policy of her government, and the enterprising spirit of her merchants, manufacturers and traders have produced upon this new theatre of Nature, we shall have before us one of the most pleasing studies which can engage the mind of the philosopher . . . (cited in Smith 1986:65).

In Lycett's painting Mount Wellington near Hobart Town, Van Dieman's Land (c1823), The Mountain is depicted, unusually, from the North. A narrow road runs across the foreground, fording a meandering stream on a bridge that appears to be designed for barges. In the centre further upstream, two pristine-white settler's cottages nestle comfortably, set on the verge of cleared land and forest. The foothills gently roll into the distance with the Organ Pipes, a small and unimposing wedge, dwarfed by the tree reaching out of the picture in the foreground. The mountain's height is somewhat distorted as the vegetation seems to be consistent to the pinnacle. The stream is a stream, not a creek, the forest is an English forest, not Australian bush; overall the mood is one of a secluded but comfortable existence in a setting that would have been very accessible to the English audience. The Mountain's dominance or imposing presence is subdued[9], yet it reveals a vast background of uninhabited land.

In comparison John Skinner Prout's painting, Mount Wellington,

Hobarton (1846), whilst still depicting a picturesque scene by introducing the benign character of the pioneer's cottage against The Mountain backdrop, appears closer to the spirit of the land. The viewer is let into the painting by following the road in the foreground, past the woman looking expectantly down the road, up to the rustic, wooden cottage. Smoke from the chimney and activity around the cottage suggest a successful settlement, as does the sawn and felled timber. In the background The Mountain's darker hues provide a distinctive contrast, suggesting its distance and immensity. It appears unapproachable with the Organ Pipes fully guarding the summit and gives to the cottage and its inhabitants an air of safety, a sanctuary amongst the wildness.

The painter's intention in both these examples seems to be to depict a picturesque and pastoral image of the new colony[10]. The Mountain is symbolic of the rugged wilderness that the pioneers sought to tame. Other painters used The Mountain to depict the sublime, Smith's latter concept of human progress.

Henry Gritten, in his painting Hobart Town (1856), like so many other painters of the period adopts the River Derwent for the foreground. The viewer is suspended above the river and is drawn across the calm, boat-reflecting waters of the harbour to the town of Hobart, and from the town upwards to the heavens by the snow capped mountain, behind which the clouds recede. Gritten completed this painting the same year he arrived in Hobart, and although there is a slight exaggeration of The Mountain's southern slope, the painting is quite an accurate topographical representation.

Norberg-Schulz suggests that "the landscape character . . . becomes manifest as a silhouette against the sky, sometimes gently undulating, sometimes serrate and wild" (1980:39). For the visitor to Hobart, particularly from the water, The Mountain forms a distinctive silhouette against the western sky. Yet Gritten, by elevating the viewer above the water, plays down The

Mountain's silhouette and emphasises the extent of the town's expansion. The picture impresses on the viewer a sense of a bustling commercial town, with the cleared foothills indicating the possibility of further growth and expansion.

By comparison, Knut Bull's Hobart Town (1855) places the viewer almost at river level. Drawn into the painting across the River Derwent, the viewer's attention is focused by the boats on the mass of The Mountain. Its silhouette is dramatically set against a turbulent, clouded sky. Hobart Town is a thin row of buildings sandwiched between two natural features. The white-caps on the river, a boat hauling under sail and the darkened immediate foreground imply a less than tranquil day. Bull (deported for forgery) studied with the Northern European Romantic painters, a movement which often used mountains to capture a sense of the sublime.

Painting was an important medium used to convey an image of the new colonies to Britain, particularly before the use of photography became popular. Immigrants may have developed a vicarious insideness as a result of these depictions of Hobart, their sense greatly influenced by the painter's approach. The technique, popular amongst the colonial painters, of painting a frontal plain in the foreground, for example a river or a road, acts like a barrier before which the viewer stands, looking at the sweep of the scene behind. This style encourages the viewer to step back and look in awe upon the grandeur and impressiveness of the vista. For viewers unfamiliar with Hobart, and even perhaps residents of the town, The Mountain would have appeared wild and unapproachable, grand in the scenery yet uninviting.

Joseph Lycett's painting
Mount Wellington near Hobart Town, Van Dieman's Land
(Source: Kolenberg 1987:14)

John Skinner Prout's painting Mount Wellington, Hobarton
(Source: Kolenberg 1987:40).

Henry Gritten's painting Hobart Town
(Source: Kolenberg 1987:47)

Knut Bull's painting Hobart Town
(courtesy of the Tasmanian Art Gallery)

As the foreigners became more familiar with the land the attitudes of landscape painters was to change:

> Whereas the aim of landscape painting had previously been to present an ideal landscape (transcending the peculiarities of different regions), the new theory of landscape art (evolving along the lines of the method of empirical observation employed by scientists) shifted the emphasis away from the ideal to what was perceived as the real landscape (Davidson 1985:9).

This transition is evident in William Piguenit's painting, 'A Mountain Top', Tasmania (1880s), which depicts the characteristic dolerite columns found on the top of The Mountain. Piguenit commented that this image "was to show the peculiar - one may almost say weird - character of the mountain solitudes where basalt on greenstone is their geological structure - such as Mt Wellington, Ben Lomond, Mt Olympus, the King William Range etc" (cited in Kolenberg 1987:90). The awesome power of this painting captures the columns' distinctive character accurately and also conveys with familiarity the feeling one experiences standing on The Mountain's plateau.

William Piguenit was born in Elizabeth Street, Hobart so, unlike the other painters referred to, The Mountain had a life-time to impress on him its nature. Self taught, his style reveals a precision that must have stemmed from close observation and long contemplation. His passion for sojourning in the wilderness, eventually giving up his job as a Government Surveyor, resulted in landscapes that are Romantic, but a Romance which appears to have been gained from personal experience rather than drawn from schooling. His paintings contain traces of the two different representational systems for portraying the landscape.

It was a century later that Lloyd Rees depicted a similarly grand scene in The Pinnacles, Mt Wellington (1980). Rees also has painted many panoramas of Mt Wellington and the Derwent:

> . . . - subjects which would daunt most artists. Romantic

> and epic these works perhaps best encapsulate our sense of visited wonder at the natural geography of the place, its particular light and atmosphere (Kolenberg 1981:8).

What is it about The Mountain that Rees and Piguenit seem to capture? Perhaps it is as André Marchand explains:

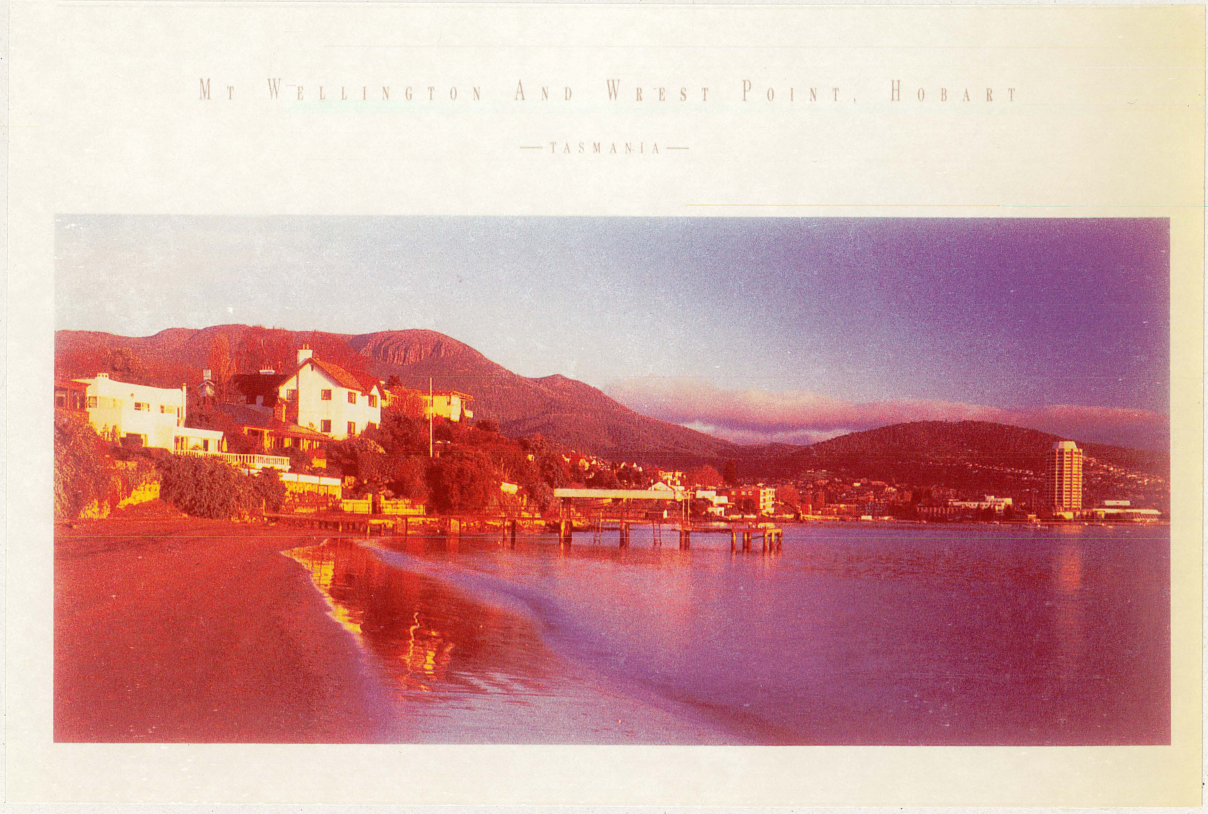
> In a forest, I have felt many times over that it was not I who looked at the forest. Some days I felt that the trees were looking at me, were speaking to me . . . I was there, listening . . . I think that the painter must be penetrated by the universe and not want to penetrate it . . . I expect to be inwardly submerged, buried. Perhaps I paint to break out (cited in Merleau-Ponty 1964:167).

Few twentieth century painters have depicted The Mountain intimately; its role in contemporary landscape painting has dwindled to a backdrop at the most. Gwen Harwood suggests, "sometimes The Mountain seems to be a theatrical backdrop with no dimensions, only an outline" (pers. comm.). Rees depicts The Mountain as if speaking with it, buried in its hazy character and dimensionless nature, yet breaking out to convey a sense of its spirit. Rees, however, must be considered an exception to the general trend of the intervening one hundred years.

The late nineteenth century saw a sweeping wave of nationalism and radicalism flow across Australia, inspiring influential art critic Sidney Dickinson to argue in 1890 that "it should be the ambition of our artists to present on canvas the earnestness, rigor, pathos and heroism of the life that is about them" (Astbury 1985:5). With the foundation of the Tasmanian Art Association in 1884, such ideas, and those of European *plein air* painting, were quickly transmitted to the state. The new appreciation is evident in Louisa Swan's Bone Mill, New Town (1890), where The Mountain is barely visible behind the mill. Emphasis is given to the colour and light of the foreground paddock and building, 'life that is about them'. The Mountain's form merges in the distance, anonymous in it's blueness.

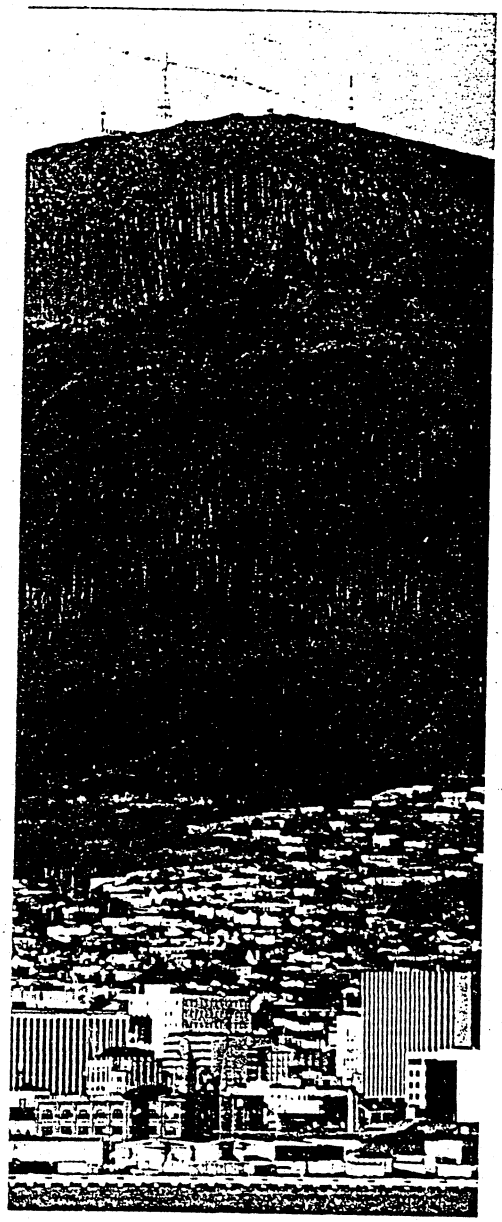
its own picture. The photograph too, possesses an existential quality of having-been-there. These novelties were developed by the early photographers of the nineteenth century, recording their explorations and activities.

Early photographs documented the activity on The Mountain; people in the snow, huts in The Mountain valleys, and what was most usually depicted, a panorama of the Hobart scene. The Mountain skyline over Hobart was conveyed *realistically*, there was less scope for artistic exaggeration of the scene and to a degree the period of early photography may have reduced the perceived grand nature of The Mountain. Even today photographs of the bridge-river-mountain, or casino-river-mountain panoramas of Hobart have become unmistakable identifiers of the city.



A postcard depicting The Mountain
(Photography: Geoffrey Lea).

Leigh Woolley, architect and urban designer, has used *realistic* portrayals of The Mountain to study the urban layout of Hobart and its surrounds (pers. comm.). The cover photograph for his report on the central urban area of Hobart presented a graphic illustration of how dominant The Mountain is over the city (1991a). The city's rising is diminished by The Mountain, which fills over two-thirds of the photograph.



The Mountain over Hobart city
(Source: Woolley 1991a).

However, these photographs do not in themselves preserve meanings, rather they offer instant appearances. Although they are traces of the real and provide accurate historical records, by themselves they convey only a subtle sense of the photographer's relationship with The Mountain. Some photographers have attempted to convey a sense of their own experience of The Mountain more explicitly.

David Stephenson has focused on Mount Wellington in a number of his works. Each work is composed of a number of large scale photographs, each from a differing perspective, butted up to one another. The odd distortions and the Kodak identification marks which remain on the prints "emphasize the arbitrary nature of the camera (its lack of verisimilitude) . . . [the] photographic works are clearly studio productions - their artifice is patently acknowledged" (Holmes 1985:505). These techniques enable Stephenson to represent his own relationship with The Mountain. In his work "The Amphitheatre", he captures the cathedral like nature of the dolerite columns, as they draw the sky down to the earth (1987). It conveys a sense of wonder at the shear verticalness of the cliffs, and a stranger to the scene would have no idea that below, hidden in the misty background, lay a city. His exhibition, "Mountain/Sea" included similar works from or of The Mountain.[11]

Paul Zicka, in his exhibition "As I Gaze Upon The Mountain", presents The Mountain overshadowing recent political controversies. One work, titled "Ayers Rock/Uluru", uses a collage of newspaper articles and photographs.[12] In this he challenges "an essentially anglo-celtic community embracing strong conservative attitudes" (1987:2) by depicting a hypothetical transfer of ownership of The Mountain to the aboriginal community. These two artists depict the significance of The Mountain from two different perspectives, each emphasising qualities of Mount Wellington that have influenced their sense of place.

Poets

Perhaps it is through the poet's word that people are most closely transported to a feeling of The Mountain's presence. Language conjures up images and imaginations that perhaps reach deeper than the canvas or photograph, which themselves are often translated and understood through language.

> Poetry is what really lets us dwell . . . Poetry does not fly above and surmount the earth in order to escape it and hover over it. Poetry is what first brings man onto the earth, making him belong to it, and thus brings him into dwelling (Heidegger 1975b:218)

In the nineteenth century impressions of The Mountain frequently focus on its physical nature. For example, in his geological article on The Mountain, Wintle writes:

> . . . [most people] have been impressed by its solemn and imposing aspect. On a clear evening, just after the sun has set, and its gracefully undulating outline is cutting a cloudless sky, its appearance is remarkably grand . . . the time worn monument of past plutonic wrath . . . [On the summit] those ponderous piles of detached stones - those shattered columns - that wide-spread dreary desolation - all tend to impress the beholder with a belief that it is of vast antiquity (1866:3).

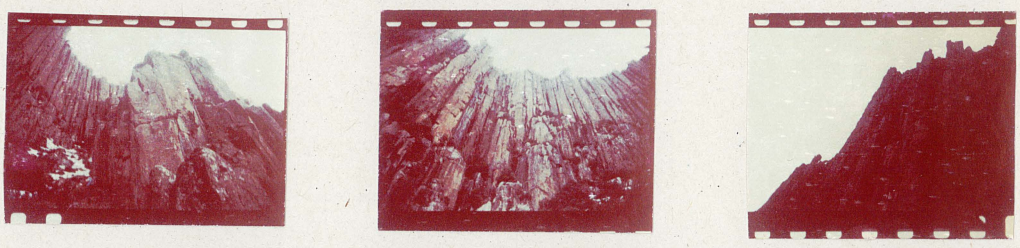
Wintle found that "amid all this rocky barrenness there is a terrible sublimity, which leaves a lasting impression on the memory of the visitor" (1866:3). The ability to appreciate the sublime was considered a gentlemanly quality, as A.J. Bicheno, bureaucrat and scientist, suggested in reference to Mount Wellington:

> Who can look upon that magnificent mountain which towers above our city, without feeling a pleasing gratitude for the gift of being rendered capable of perceiving the intellectual and glorious delights of the sublime and beautiful? To view it with its varying cloak of mist or shroud of snow, and when clear and distinct in feature beneath the bright blue sky . . . always raises in my mind the most excited feelings of delight (cited in Roe 1983:5).

Colin Knight, in a contemporary poem "Hobart", describes the setting at night, the bridge, the city "sprawling with luminous display to the foothills" and

> . . . the
> towering mountain
> wearing a snood of early snow
> moonwhite, like polarized sugar.
> A nocturnal scene
> for a souvenir photographer (Knight 1985:6).[13]

The Mountain's presence in contemporary poetry has tended to evoke deeper meanings, which I will discuss in chapter five.



Views of the Organ Pipes from within the Amphitheatre.

The Organ Pipes, a most distinctive feature of The Mountain, has attracted poetic descriptions. De Quincey suggests "the Organ Pipes are aptly named for both appearance and for the sounds they produce when the wind strikes against them making various tones that wail and roar" (1987:26). F.C. Meyer, a visitor to Hobart, was moved to pray:

> Halfway up Mount Wellington I see
> Tall Organ Pipes with frame of stones,
> Producing sounds of stragent tones,
> Halfway up Mount Wellington I hear
> Them play when days and winds are frisky
> And temperatures are fine and crispy . . .
> Halfway up Mount Wellington I stay
> To hear sweet music, celestial chords,
> Much sweeter than the spoken words,
> Halfway up Mount Wellington I pray (1940:26).

However, Conrad describes them in a different light:

> To name them is to tame them. The metaphor pacifies the

> geological hazard, and romantically pretends that nature is sounding a solemn diapason. Driving beneath the cliff of stone pipes, you can watch the image go in and out of focus. Close up, the simile is seen to be a deceit: just a chaos of cracked facets and broken ledges (1988:33).

To walk along the Organ Pipes Track, or to venture closer up, to be surrounded by them in the amphitheatre as Stephenson's photograph depicts, one cannot help but stand in awe as the columns gather the sky and drag it to earth. This sensation is expressed by Lisel Mueller in her poem "Monet Refuses the Operation":

> . . . Fifty-four years before I could see
> Rouen cathedral is built
> of parallel shafts of sun,
> and now you want to restore
> my youthful errors: Fixed
> notions of top and bottom,
> the illusion of three dimensional space,
> . . . Doctor,
> if only you could see
> how heaven pulls earth into its arms
> and how infinitely the heart expands
> to claim this world, blue vapor without end (1984:121).

More than 'a chaos of cracked facets and broken ledges' the Organ Pipes act out their simile, inspiring an uplifting sense that is easily associated with the vertical nature of a church and its music.

The Mountain's Setting

These views of the physical setting from the artist's perspective conjure up images of how The Mountain exists in people's consciousness. The Mountain was popular as a symbol of Romanticism, conveying the picturesque or sublime. Until recently, there seems to be a dearth of Mountain portrayals which attempt to explore The Mountain's *essentiality*. The range of poses and moods The Mountain presents means that such an undertaking is a daunting prospect. Perhaps it is also indicative of the lack of exploration that people in Hobart have undertaken into an understanding of their place.

As George Seddon has noted: "I had to learn to see Australia . . . the imaginative comprehension of a continent is as much a pioneering enterprise as breaking the clod" (1976:16). David Stephenson appears to undertake such a task, and some of his comprehension may well have been gathered through his rockclimbing activities on The Mountain. Indeed to gain an intimate knowledge of The Mountain one must experience it directly; to, in a sense, socialize with it.

Endnotes

[1] 'Approaching The Mountain' is used broadly to refer to any approach in which The Mountain is seen as an element of the landscape. Strictly speaking one may be approaching specifically Hobart or a particular suburb but it is the peculiar nature of The Mountain's physical setting that one is also approaching The Mountain, although it may not be one's final destination.

[2] The word 'artist' is used in its broad sense to include painters, photographers and poets.

[3] One thousand, six hundred and ten metres.

[4] Although Margaret Scott believes Wellington is suitable for The Mountain; the Iron Duke being a rock-like presence in the England of his time, dangerous to those who failed to respect his power (pers. comm.).

[5] There is some doubt as to the authenticity of the legends recorded by W.J. Cotton which were told to his family in 1831 on the East Coast by an Aborigine named Timler. Julia Clark has found evidence that chronologically contradicts this recounting having taken place (pers. comm.).

[6] The Meehan Range is named after James Meehan, the first surveyor in Tasmania (Luckman 1987:83) who was given the task of drawing up the plans for Hobart, developing Collins, Liverpool, Argyle, Elizabeth, Murray, Harrington, Barrack, Bathurst, Campbell and Davey Streets. Coincidently then, driving from the airport, the visitor's first impression of Hobart comes into view only after passing through the Meehan Range.

[7] Quoted in full, Elliot's summary is:

> The first need in a new country or colony must obviously be in one way or another to comprehend the physical environment. In poetry we find this need

> reflected, in colonial times, in an obsessive preoccupation with landscape and description. At first the urge is merely topographical, to answer the question, what does the place look like? The next is detailed and ecological: how does life arrange itself there? What plants, what animals, what activity, how does man fit in? The next may be moral: how does such a place influence people? And how, in their turn, do the people make their mark upon the place? How have they developed it? Next come subtler enquiries: what spiritual and emotional qualities does such a people develop in such an environment? In what way do the forces of nature impinge upon the imagination? How do aesthetic evaluations grow? How may poetry come to life in such a place as Australia? (1967:4).

[8] Intentionally I will describe only a selection of works that depict The Mountain, paintings which I consider reflect the general trends of landscape art of the period. The most influential painters, that is those whose works are most likely to affect others' sense of place will be considered, however this is not to ignore the fact that numerous painters have depicted The Mountain, even through the twentieth century. A complete review of such paintings would be a thesis in its own right!

[9] No evidence has yet been discovered as to when, or if, indeed, Lycett ever visited Tasmania (Kolenberg 1987:62). Supposing Lycett did not visit Hobart, he would never have gained a first-hand experience of The Mountain's presence, and this may further explain his particularly benign depiction of The Mountain.

[10] However, Skinner Prout spent much of his four years in Tasmania exploring the wilderness, including The Mountain, depicting them "with a mood and freshness almost unique for the time, and not as a transplanted European landscape" (Brown 1985:45). In his watercolour drawing of a eucalypt forest devasted by a bush fire, Mount Wellington (the ascent) Hobarton (1847), he demonstrates "his competence and versatility with a subject, and his grasp of composition, colour and space which he had learnt to apply to the Australian landscape and which many other Australian artists were struggling to reproduce much later in the nineteenth and even the twentieth century" (Brown 1985:48). He was also the first artist to record Wellington Falls. In the Cataract Glen, Mount Wellington, Van Dieman's Land (1845) depicts the jointed dolerite columns and thinly leafed eucalyptus trees surrounding the Falls.

[11] Stephenson explores the Mountain/Sea relationship in words as well:

> Male Female
> Passive Active
> Eroded Deposited
> Rising Falling
> Ascent Descent
> Hard Soft
> Roar Silent
> Sublime Beautiful

Adenergic Contemplative
Physical Mental
Direct Mediated
Nature Culture
Self Other (1987).

[12] Zicka used newspaper articles which reported the transfer of Ayers Rock to the aboriginal community, but overlaid the pictures of Ayers Rock with photographs of The Mountain.

[13] Poems that are referred to in this study are quoted in full in Appendix B.

CHAPTER 4

Socializing With The Mountain

Activities that bring The Mountain and people together provide a means to develop direct personal relationships with The Mountain, to get to know its character and personality from within. "A sense of place shows most clearly in the way the community feels about and uses the landscape" (Seddon 1972:20). By investigating uses and associated feelings, an indication of The Mountain's significance will be revealed.

This may more clearly indicate Heidegger's notion of dwelling. Dwelling obviously revolves around the activities of people in their every-day lifeworld[1], yet this must necessarily occur in a landscape: "to dwell, therefore, also means to become friends with a natural place" (Norberg-Schulz 1985:7). The various activities pursued by people on The Mountain will indicate the type of friendships they have developed with it.

Walking on The Mountain

The Mountain lies within walking distance of Hobart. Its slopes are crisscrossed by a number of distinct walking tracks and fire trails which reveal much of The Mountain's history and character. The first European walkers were mainly explorers and scientists, using The Mountain to view the country they had settled in, or to unlock the qualities of the flora and fauna that abounded on its slopes. The botanist Robert Brown, during his nine month stay in 1804, climbed The Mountain "ten times and found it uncommonly productive . . .most of the new specimens acquired in Van Diemen's Land belonging to it" (cited in de Quincey 1987:14). Botanical interest in the colony was awakened and with keen interest being shown for the new discoveries by the Kew Gardens, The Mountain became a mecca for botanists.

In 1852 Frederick Mackie, a Quaker missionary and an amateur botanist, arrived in Hobart Town and during his stay went on many walks, exploring the lower slopes of The Mountain. Development activities were already starting to take their toll. He noted in his journal that ". . . it is in fact being rapidly cleared and the few large trees that remain are more or less charred with fire . . . the ground being almost bare of vegetation the effect is quite dismal" (cited in Nicholls 1973:53).

Through botany and other natural sciences one is drawn closer to the natural world as some of its secrets are unravelled in all their seemingly infinite variety and complexity. Walking on The Mountain's tracks, one is constantly reminded of the stories locked within the natural world. People with a botanical interest come to identify with particular plants or rocks, so that their destruction is felt as a personal loss. The encroachment of the city on The Mountain slopes even today brings about a feeling of dismay in botanists. The Mount Wellington Range is home to a number of rare and threatened plant species which are not adequately protected in National Parks within the state.[2]

Knowledge of The Mountain's flora is by no means complete. Ann Ratkowsky and her husband discovered several new species of liverworts on The Mountain in the 1970s (Ratkowsky 1986:87). Ratkowsky's studies have taken her to the top of Mount Wellington more than one thousand times, but never by car, and she maintains that The Mountain is ". . . essential and valuable for us to be able to satisfy our personal needs for recreation of both body and mind. We are indeed fortunate . . . to have the Wellington Range so close to our capital city of Hobart" (Ratkowsky 1986:89).

As a recreational pursuit, walking on The Mountain was greatly encouraged by Lady Jane Franklin, especially after her two expeditions on The Mountain in 1837 were reported in the Hobart Town Courier. The second expedition

report stated:

> It seemed a subject of surprises to every one, how it had been possible that they should have lived on from year to year in a miserable little insignificant town so close to such sublime scenery, without having once availed themselves of opportunities so easily attained of enjoying that high order of pleasures which such excursions afford to cultivated minds (29 December, 1837).

Hoping to encourage walkers on The Mountain, Lady Franklin had two shelter huts built, one at the Springs, and the other at the Pinnacle. Yet 'cultivated minds', or the ability to enjoy the 'sublime', did not necessarily engender a caring attitude towards that from which they derived pleasure. One of the gigantic columns of the "sublime amphitheatre" in which "they awaited the God of day" (29 December, 1837) was ceremoniously painted with the names of all eighteen pilgrims in one foot long characters of white lead, "as a monument to commemorate the successful ascent of Lady Franklin and the other ladies" (29 December, 1837).

The discovery of Wellington Falls sometime in the early 1840s, and subsequent reports in the press of the first expeditions, encouraged the adventurous to attempt the arduous sixteen hour journey to view 'this sublime spectacle'. By 1845 there was sufficient interest in 'this wonder of the world' to raise enough money through public subscription to build a pathway from the Springs to Wellington Falls. This became a popular excursion for visitors; a challenging introduction to The Mountain and one which would have necessitated respect for The Mountain's rugged terrain and propensity to provide inclement weather.

Meeting Places

For those less willing to challenge The Mountain's temperament, the building of several ice houses in the vicinity of the Springs during the 1850s provided a more easily accessible focal point where walkers could be "delighted at a trifling cost with a luxury only properly appreciated by the panting polka dancer, or by the restless fever patient whose temples are

cooled by the delicious application of ice" (unknown source, cited in Thwaites 1974:83). This visitor in 1858 also observed:

> . . . no less than fifty-seven people were counted at the [Ice] House or the Springs . . . one gentleman who had served under Don Carlos enthusiastically calling out with a confused mixture of language and a strong mixture in a tin pot, Viva, the Ice House! (unknown source, cited in Thwaites 1974:83).

The track built to the Ice Houses from the Springs was later extended and became the popular route to the Pinnacle until the late 1890s (de Quincey 1987:69). These developments instigated an interest in walking on The Mountain. Other developments such as timber felling, the water works and the opening of the Huon Road in 1869 to service that expanding district, meant The Mountain's slopes became more accessible so 'that high order of pleasures which such excursions afford to cultivated minds' was now enjoyed by an increasing number of visitors and residents alike.

Socializing with The Mountain on a more intimate level may be indicated by the activities that were associated with the Huts, which were predominantly built during the 1890s and early 1900s. Up to forty huts were constructed in this period, the more elegant examples built with elaborate gables and dormer-windows (Davies 1972:58). In its Complete Guide to Tasmania (1906), the Tasmanian Government Railway Department mentioned:

> The Huts are the work of young fellows who spend their week-ends in the bush, and they have spared no pains in making their temporary dwelling places pleasing to the vision, and also comfortable to inhabit (1906:36).

The area called 'The Huts', in the gullies behind Cascades, was an ideal place to escape from the city for weekends or picnics only requiring a two mile walk after a tram ride to Cascades. Set in the cool fern and myrtle gullies, occupants could relax and enjoy tea or roast lunch and one hut even had a cleared area for tennis.

The Huts became so popular that in the Hobart Tourist Bureau's 1915 guidebook, tourists were advised to obtain a map showing the locations of the Huts from the Bureau (1915:20). Occupants complained of persistent gate-crashers and vandalism and attempts were made to conceal the entrances. Combined with the continual maintenance required and payment of rents to the Cascade Brewery, by the end of World War 1, most had fallen into disrepair, and eventually were destroyed by fires. When additional land was purchased from Cascades by the Hobart City Council in 1929, only two people were allowed to maintain their huts (de Quincey 1987:89).

Enticing Visitors

At the turn of the century there was an increasing promotion of tourism, and a plethora of guidebooks. The descriptions of Mount Wellington in these guidebooks may suggest some popular perceptions of the time used by the authors to entice visitors to explore The Mountain's slopes. One of these guidebooks, produced by the Tasmanian Steam Navigation Company, suggested that The Mountain "is generally the first object of interest to visitors, and no one willingly leaves the city without having made the ascent of the mountain" (1887:13).[3]

The emphasis is usually given to ascending The Mountain. As I have already suggested this ascension for some people can have an air of reverence; seeking to achieve, with the help of the mountain, some spiritual goal. The intent of the ascender is perhaps indicative of the relationship he/she develops with the mountain. The guidebook goes on to describe the Pinnacle as ". . . marked by a square pile of logs, which can easily be climbed by men, and without much difficulty by any ladies who are anxious to feel they have *done* the mountain thoroughly" (1887:13). The feeling of having 'done' a mountain, of conquering it, differs markedly from listening to, or thinking like a mountain.

Addressing The View

The desire to 'do' The Mountain and take in its view is for many people an important aspect of their relationship with it. For Dr. George Bass, probably the first European to climb to the top, his intention was to conquer The Mountain and the reward was the view. Similarly an 1869 guidebook noted that; "the remarkable propensity which Englishmen have for knocking their heads against the sky" (Thomas 1869:140) was justified in the case of Mount Wellington because of the grand view it gave of Hobart Town.

The view may conjure up many images for people. Some have noted the fact that Tasmania is not characterised by expansive vistas. For immigrants to the island this can result in a sense of claustrophobia, which may dissipate by participating in the extensive expanses mountain views reveal. On the other hand Louisa Meredith, although a great admirer of The Mountain, was deterred from walking to the top. Her husband had explained ". . . that the view from the top lost some of its appeal to become a map rather than a picture" (de Quincey 1987:31).

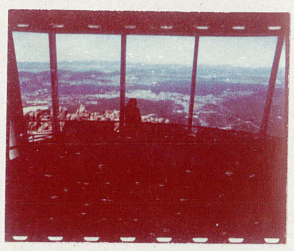
Standing on the Pinnacle, looking down at the map-like bays and peninsulas may evoke one's sense of being an islander:

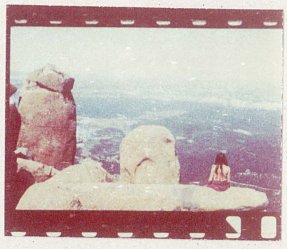
> . . . the presence of water may emphasize the place-structure of the surface relief . . . The island thus, is a place *par excellence*, appearing as an 'isolated', clearly defined figure. Existentially the island brings us back to the origins; it rises out of the element from which everything was originally born (Norberg-Schulz 1980:39).

People who travel by motorised transport experience less of the physiological and perhaps spiritual aspects of the ascension, and the view may gain in relative importance. Perhaps it is this increasing importance that the recently constructed viewing shelter commemorates. This building, as well as other proposed developments, may be indicative of how some people relate with The Mountain.

Encased in a viewing shelter, does one shelter from the view? Cut off from

the wind, the smells, the sense of exposure of The Mountain around, people experience the view in its purely visual sense. Interpretation panels demand their vision as well, enabling viewers to glean information so that "within the shelter everything is knowable, Hobart can be viewed, captured in a glance, a snapshot of certainty" (Flanagan 1991:2). A sense of certainty is implicit in the shelter's apparent control; over the weather, the view, Hobart and The Mountain itself. Mounting the pulpit-like observation platform, pioneer passions lecture the view; the echoing interior contradicts The Mountain's voiceless expanse.



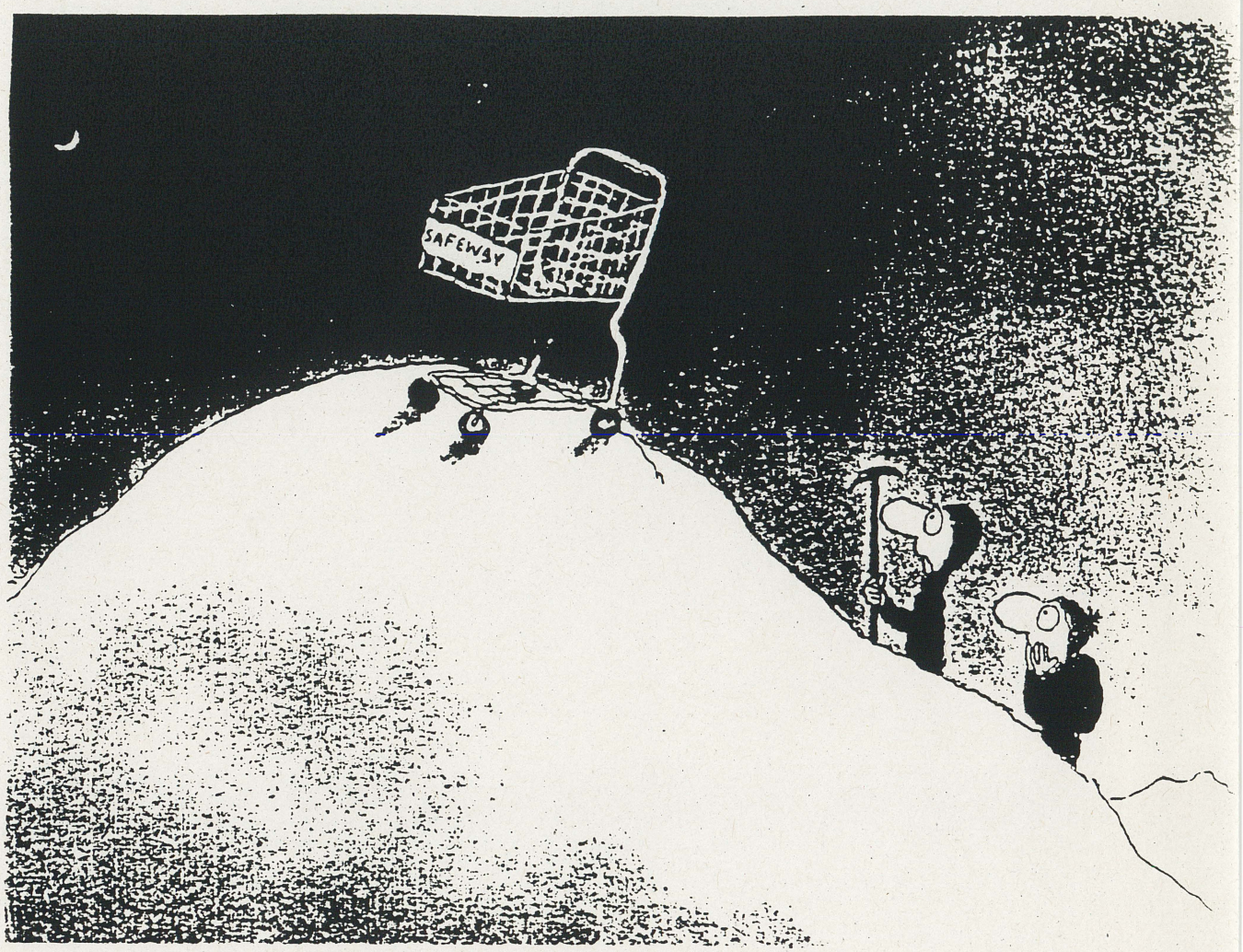


Views from The Mountain, within and without a viewing shelter.

The Mountain's pinnacle is not particularly well defined; the plateau reaches out towards the South-West, invitingly suggesting that there is something further to explore. The viewing shelter joins the cluster of ironmongery which scar The Mountain's skyline and define the Pinnacle more conclusively, bringing a certainty to the location of the Pinnacle itself. Frank Lloyd Wright believed:

> No house should ever be on a hill or on anything. It should be of a hill - belong to it. Hill and house should live together, each the happier for the other. When organic architecture is properly carried out, no landscape is ever outraged by it, but always developed by it (cited in Archer, 1989:20).

People I have spoken to have expressed their disappointment at the viewing shelter's siting, and its apparent lack of sensitivity to The Mountain's character. The architect, Neil Wade, believes "it is the most intrusive site" (Mercury 22 December, 1988) and to site it further down would have meant a reduced view. His aim was to reflect "the raw brutality of a mountain top with its scarred and weathered surfaces" (Mercury 22 December, 1988). The Mountain does indeed appear scarred by it.



Bitter Disappointment

Leunig's depiction of a scarred mountain top (1985).

In the past, other developments suggested for The Mountain have included a pinnacle restaurant and a cable car. Often people suggesting such proposals describe The Mountain as "a unique tourist asset for Hobart" (Mercury 1 February, 1968) or "Hobart's best natural asset" (Mercury 24 August 1968)[4] and imply it should be managed like other financial assets to obtain a return. The Mountain is to be prostituted for financial gain with little consideration given to its essence or unique character and in the process this may be destroyed.

"Yet it's not ours; we are its. People are owned by their landscape, which

outlasts them" (Conrad 1988:31). An Eskimo commented to Lopez: "we are here because our ancestors are real" (1986:251). They were 'real' by virtue of their knowledge and use of the land, their affection for it. To use commercial language, The Mountain is a going concern that will exist for millennia, accumulating goodwill as it passes through future generations. For people living in Hobart, many still strangers to their home landscape, understanding how goodwill can be invested in The Mountain requires an understanding of The Mountain itself.

Recreational Activities

Perhaps a deeper understanding of The Mountain is developed by those who frequent its slopes, like the botanists, in pursuit of activities that work with The Mountain rather than trying to control it. Recreation is for most people an attempt to achieve some higher level of physical and spiritual well-being. An activity which brings one physically close to The Mountain, such as walking, running or rockclimbing, provides an ideal opportunity to sense the spirit of The Mountain. But this sense is unique for each individual and because of this I will describe my own experience of recreating with The Mountain. I believe this was an important element in the development of my relationship with it.

On the weekends, many runners congregate on the Pipeline Track. Usually I would race on the Saturday and Sunday would be a day of rest when we enjoyed LSD (a long, slow distance run). The Sunday Pipeline runs gained almost religious significance. A group would gather in the cloisters, the Fern Tree Tavern car park, and then commence the pilgrimage along the well worn track; points of reference along the way would spark conversations, clear water creeks would entice a cleansing drink. Most runs would continue along the gently contoured track at least until the saintly Cathedral Rock came into view, before turning back. The return journey often passed with surprising ease; the pure and crisp air produced a feeling of exhilaration that prevented the sensation of fatigue.

On these runs I would often experience what is termed 'a runner's high', an experience which may parallel Seamon's 'heightened environmental encounter'. Drawn into a trance-like state one seemingly loses conscious thought and feet seem to find their own way along the rocky track. This state was appealing and The Mountain's magnetism was partly due to its ability to induce such an awareness. The experience of these runs stands in contrast to that of competing in The Pinnacle Race or The Mountain Relay, when The Mountain became a hindrance to one's intentions.

One of the first of these competitive conquerings of The Mountain's height was in 1903. A "Go-As-You-Please" race was organised from the city, along Davey Street to Fern Tree, then by track to The Springs and up the Organ Pipe Track to the Pinnacle and back. For the winner of this arduous seventeen mile journey, a double barrelled shot gun was the prize. Many wore only light singlets and knickers and of the thirty-nine starters only fourteen finished; two competitors died of exposure in the blizzard-like conditions. Unveiling a memorial, W.R.C. Jarvis said that while Richards, one of the deceased, had displayed determination and pluck, man was given strength and intelligence to attain goals of more lasting value (cited in de Quincey 1987:77).

These two examples indicate two dissimilar relationships that may develop towards The Mountain through recreational activities. By experiencing 'runner's highs' and by running regularly on the Pipeline Track, I developed a sparing attitude towards that track and its surrounds. This was most obviously highlighted when I unexpectedly came across bulldozer scourings that had cleansed the vegetation from part of the hillside which spanned the track. The resulting wound was painful to see, and I felt that somehow the flow of the track had been severed, caught under the bulldozers blade. I didn't experience a 'high' that day, and even today the track feels scarred.

The Pinnacle Road was, in contrast, something I set out to overcome. I

never experienced such intense exhaustion and difficulty in breathing than in these races, due to a combination of The Mountain's altitude and steep gradient. Several reference points along the road stand as continual reminders of the voluntary hardship I had endured. I imagine if this hardship had been due to necessity, the unsociable feelings these places engender would be even stronger.

Ultimately, my relationship with The Mountain rests on the more enjoyable experiences. Through walking on The Mountain these now permeate many places, but each walk seems to uncover a new aspect of The Mountain, another part of its personality is revealed.

Pure Air

One of the main qualities recreationalists seek from The Mountain is the fresh and invigorating air. Odours linger in the air, suspended globules of scent that are plucked by one's nostrils. Bachelard analyses the qualities of air that can be substantiated and describes odours as ". . . perceptible bonds. There is a continuity in their very bodies . . . they bind memories to desires" (1988:137). Is it then precisely the absence of familiar odours, freedom from reminders of the past that is the attractiveness of pure air? "Pure air is an impression of youth and newness" (Bachelard 1988:137).

A number of natives have commented on how they journey to The Mountain to clear their minds and for many Europeans the resurgence in a positive interest in mountains in the nineteenth century was due to their apparent health giving qualities. Spas and resorts were built to accommodate the ill for whom mountains had been prescribed as a cure. In his poem "Mt Wellington (Sanitorium of Tasmania)", O'Reilly conveys such sentiments:

> When you've sampled doctor's tonics and the chemist's
> patent pills
> And you're sick of taking pick-ups everyday;
> When you've tried all sorts of nostrums to cure your
> fancied ills,

> And you cannot chase the darned blues away;
> Just stroll up to the mountain, where the air is pure and clear,
> And the handiworks of Nature are all blest,
> You'll forget about your troubles in that glorious atmosphere;
> There your jaded mind and body will find rest.
>
> . . . There your thoughts will rise so far above the sordid things of life,
> As your lungs inhale the ozone from the air;
> And far away will seem to you the world and all its strife
> Its petty ills, its envy and its care.
> Your soul may burst the shackles of convention's binding laws
> And spread its wings in imagination's sphere;
> High upon that mountain top, for a moment you will pause
> To drink in happiness unspoilt by earthly fear (1936:9).

The fresh air, extensive views and a sense of being in nature may be considered as some of The Mountain's resources, and their use by recreationalists has had a relatively small impact on The Mountain's character. More tangible resources have also been extensively used, often leading to noticeable impacts on The Mountain's nature.

Tangible Resources

The Mountain has been, and still remains, a major source of fresh water for Hobart. The proposal to tap The Mountain's southern slope was first put forward in 1831 and by 1890 an extensive system of pipes, stone guttering and aqueducts, reaching as far as the weir near Wellington Falls, diverted the watercourses to the Waterworks Reservoirs and on to greater Hobart. The robbing of the lower slopes' water supply may have had an effect on the vegetation, although the extent of this would be difficult to ascertain. More obvious are the roads and tracks that follow the pipeline. Although these may create damage, such as the landslips on the road leading to Wellington Falls, they allow people to explore the slopes of The Mountain and piece together places of historic interest. They have become part of The Mountain's character, and hint at the importance The Mountain still plays

as a provider of fresh water.

Of less subtle impact on The Mountain's character was the felling of timber, especially the blue gum, its straightness and durability making it particularly suitable for building. Peter Degraves, who constructed the Cascade Brewery in 1833, practically owned The Mountain by 1840, his land totalling about five thousand acres (de Quincey 1987:45). This holding was critical for his company's timber mill and shipyard and over the years millions of feet of timber were hauled down from The Mountain; in 1855 the timber mill alone earned a thirty thousand pound profit (de Quincey 1987:46).

The botanical artist Marianne North noted that the blue gum was rare after climbing on The Mountain's slopes in 1881 (de Quincey 1987:68). Perrin warned that the denudation of The Mountain's timber could have dire consequences for the town's water supply and with little resistance on the ridges, winds would career onward with a gusty cyclonic character ". . . and perhaps culminate in the wrecking of houses or shipping. The dust-storms of this city illustrate this species of wind, and the more forest land is cleared the worse these storms will become" (1887:4).

Perrin reported that fires were ". . . a constant and regular scourge during the summer months" as well as "troops of boys, armed with tomahawks and guns . . . chopping down saplings, or setting fire to the forest" (1887:3). In a footnote reporting the devastation of the January, 1887 fire he remarked ". . . no attempt seems to be made to arrest the progress of a fire once started" (1887:5). Further, he quoted from a meeting of the Royal Society of Tasmania in 1884, in which Judge Dobson, the chairman:

> . . . alluded to the wanton and mischievous destruction of the tree ferns at Mount Wellington. Many glens and other localities on the Mountain had been utterly robbed of all their beauty and attraction . . . in very many cases for the mere decoration of a ballroom (1887:4).

A Public Park

Perrin's report hinted at the establishment of a People's Park, but it wasn't until 1906, as a result of considerable agitation by various organisations and individuals, that a large part of the eastern face was declared a Public Park by Act of Parliament:

> vested in the Mayor, Alderman and Citizens of the City of Hobart and their successors, to be held in trust as a Public Park for the pleasure, recreation and amusement of His Majesty's subjects and people (cited in Aves 1955:42).

Once The Mountain became a Public Park, the Hobart City Council began to acquire the land and make it more accessible for visitors. Plans for the building of an hotel at the Springs eventuated with the opening of The Springs Hotel in 1907. The proposal for this development originally met with resistance from the Mayor and the Health Department because of its potentially detrimental effect on the water supply. Eventually the water intakes were fenced and pipes laid "to prevent pollution from the rubbish and people who constantly fell in" (de Quincey 1987:91).

From various photographs the Hotel appears to have been designed sensitively to suit the surrounds. However, economically the Hotel never really prospered despite increasing tourism; the reason, some have suggested, was because it was never granted a liquor licence (Davies pers. comm.). In the 1930's the Hotel had a brief period of profitability, reflecting the popularity of The Mountain; walking clubs were being formed, new tracks were cut and the Rock Cabin opened at the Pinnacle. The Hotel advertised The Mountain Park as the "Hiker's Paradise" with "the wealth of Natural Scenic Splendour" (cited in de Quincey 1987:92). This increased activity also engendered a major development.

The Road

The completion of the road from the Springs to the Pinnacle in 1937 meant that motor vehicles could now penetrate The Mountain's full extent. This in a sense was only a convenient by-product of its construction, the most

important factor being that The Mountain became a resource providing a visible means to economically and psychologically lift the depressed society. E.T. Emmett relates that his proposal for the road's construction was at the bequest of the Premier, A.G. Ogilvie, who was seeking "a recommendation for some job on which a considerable number of unemployed could be usefully put to work" (1968:11). As the road edged up The Mountain it became a symbol of society's determination to overcome economic hardships as well as a "triumph of engineering ingenuity over nature at its wildest" (Mercury 1 January, 1937).

'Mulga Mick' O'Reilly wrote of his experience working on the Pinnacle road:

> The men who are building the Pinnacle Road,
> Up on the mountain side,
> Are a cosmopolitan noisy crew,
> Deep in their hearts they're staunch and true,
> Sinners are many and saints are few,
> Up on the mountain side.
>
> . . . When unborn thousands gaze upon
> The view from the mountain side,
> Some lyrical bard will compose an ode
> Where all the praise may be bestowed
> Upon the men building the Pinnacle Road,
> Up on the mountain side ("The Pinnacle Road" 1936:5).

Despite the incredible hardship the construction crews endured, not all could sing the praises of their efforts. For some 'Ogilvie's Scar', as the distinctive line along The Mountain's face became known, indicated the suffering of The Mountain. Emmett wrote of how during its advance "a young lady almost in tears begged of me to use my influence in stopping the scarring of the mountain side" (1968:11).

Ironically, the view of 'Ogilvie's Scar' from the city presently lies mostly hidden behind the rejuvenated bush and it is in fact the trail blazed for the telegraph wires, which lie just above the road, that visibly scars The Mountain. This trail services the growing community of towers and

buildings, perched precariously close to the organ pipes. The towers are technological parasites on The Mountain's very essence, its vertical immensity. Such a quality was once revered; perhaps the towers are symbolic of our current effort to communicate with the gods but, condom clad, their capacity for conversing could be questioned.

Conversations with The Mountain itself were also transmuted in the 1950s as more and more people became car owners. Once-distant places moved closer and the experience of a journey to The Mountain changed: "now, however, there is no fun in climbing [The Mountain] when you may go by car" (Mercury 28 July, 1959). The rambling walker was even considered a bit eccentric:

> He perhaps avoids the pinnacle where crowds step out of buses and motor cars and might question his mentality were he to confess he had ascended by means of the track (Mercury 28 July, 1959).

Bringing the mountain top to the people (Leunig 1983).

Leunig's illustration suggests that in bringing a mountain top to the people, the essence of the mountain is destroyed. This is not to say that travelling to the top of Mount Wellington by car is wrong. However the essence of The Mountain is perhaps revealed to those who climb it's slopes experiencing The Mountain itself rather than the technological means of its mastery.

Caring Attitudes

People pursuing activities on The Mountain form a relationship with it. Some activities may seek to exploit the resources of The Mountain for economic gain. Such pursuits often impinge on the less tangible of The Mountain's resources, and people, whose friendships with The Mountain are based on these qualities, may experience loss as a consequence. Other activities are more conducive to developing a sparing attitude and friendship with The Mountain.

Early concerns for the well-being of The Mountain were voiced in 1847 by Louisa Meredith, who made these observations at the Springs:

> The ferns, as they ever are, were verdant and graceful, though rather small, and the gurgling brook was pretty; the empty champagne bottles which bristled beside the rocks, and the corks and greasy sandwich papers lurking amongst the moss savoured considerably more of the creature comforts than the picturesque (cited in Rae-Ellis 1979:146).

Perrin noted that "the great advantages possessed by this grand recreational-ground, its nearness to the city, and other natural beauties, should make the proper care and supervision of a place . . . the first care of its citizens" (1887:3). Care and supervision of The Mountain has surfaced most recently in the Wellington Range Working Group's Public Consultation Program[5], a precursor to a draft management plan for the Mount Wellington Range.

In response to this Program, an editorial in the Mercury noted:

> . . . Mount Wellington, as fortress-like as it appears,

> needs the help of the community if it is to withstand the assault of the thousands of people who enjoy its grandeur, not realising that they are also a threat to its ecological well-being (15 August, 1991).

The Mountain does not speak in a verbal sense; its well-being must be interpreted by people. The health of The Mountain was interpreted by Meredith and Perrin with reference to aesthetic qualities. More recently ecological considerations adjudge its health. Ecology provides a means of understanding the relationships of plants and animals within the environment. A sensitivity to these interdependencies is often compared with the Aborigines' understanding of the environment. But Aborigines also understand the environment in terms of its spiritual qualities:

> The Aboriginal people had intimate material attachments to this land, and we are coming to appreciate that these were founded upon and informed by spiritual and symbolic ties. White Australia, however, is yet to find the symbols and legends upon which to firmly base its identity in the continent and its relationships with the environment (Russell 1987:1).

An understanding of our spiritual and symbolic ties with The Mountain will add to our understanding of its well-being.

Endnotes

[1] Lifeworld refers to the taken-for-granted pattern and context of everyday life in which people routinely conduct their daily affairs without having to bring each gesture, behaviour and event to conscious attention (Seamon 1982:124).

[2] The authors of the report, Reservation Analysis of Tasmanian Forests, classified the Mount Wellington Range area as being one of the most important areas in the State, outside the areas presently reserved, in terms of the number of rare and threatened species of flora that it contains (Kirkpatrick and Brown 1991:41).

[3] Yet the Tasmanian Government Railway Department's 1906 guidebook suggested; "a year or two ago an ascent of Mount Wellington was an undertaking attempted only by the hardy few" (1906:34).

[4] These comments related to plans for a pinnacle restaurant development in the late 1960s. More recently a Director of the Hobart Chamber of Commerce, Vincent Brown, in lamenting Tasmania's paucity of man-made tourist attractions, suggested: "we accept that we have the natural assets and that is why we have to build . . . we should build on Mt Wellington, not literally, but building on the asset" (Mercury 13 June, 1987). Yet, in the same article Brown stated his support for the chairlift development, contradicting his reluctance to 'build literally'. David Phillips, general manager of the Tasmanian Visitor Corporation, stated: "no other Australian capital city has such a unique mountain, yet its existence has not been used to Hobart's fullest advantage" (Mercury 7 November, 1987).

[5] In July, 1991, the Working Group produced a Summary of Submissions, which noted: "this program is the first step in upgrading the existing draft management plan for the Range, which was produced in 1981 but never formalized and rarely used as a management guide" (1991:i). Three hundred and seventy submissions were received from the public, detailing their concerns and suggestions on a broad range of issues. The report noted that "many respondents expressed a deep affinity with the mountain and its environment, and wanted the area managed to perpetuate those values important to them, many of which were related to the natural and cultural values" (1991:vi).

CHAPTER 5

Dwelling With The Mountain

In this chapter I will investigate how, in our taken-for-granted lifeworlds, The Mountain maintains a significance. It is through our daily routines, which become ritualised, that we unselfconsciously embody the place we live in. Expatriate poet, Margaret Scott, speaking at the Salamanca Writers Weekend (24 November, 1991), observed that it was these rituals she perhaps missed the most when migrating to a new country.

The physical setting of The Mountain marks peoples' emotions aesthetically and socializing with The Mountain enables people to develop a closer and more particular bond with The Mountain. Through dwelling with The Mountain, and through developing an authentic sense of place, people become sensitized to the meanings and significances that are evoked by these various qualities of The Mountain. Dwelling is pervaded by sparing which lets The Mountain be, the way it is.

The Lightning Tree

Mount Wellington, like most mountains, engenders a significance because of its vertical immensity: it stands as a meeting point between earth and sky. The Mountain, in its essence, assembles the world; that is, Heidegger's interplay of the fourfold. Living in our taken-for-granted lifeworlds, such significances may not be apparent. However, certain events may highlight and bring to our attention a recognition of the interplay of the fourfold. For example, when lightning strikes the earth. The Romans deified, and enclosed with fences, places where lightning struck the earth. Similarly, the Lightning Tree, standing on The Mountain's eastern slope, is a monument to such an occasion. A sign attached to its trunk marks its significance for all who pass by.[1]

This image of sky meeting earth was also significant to the Tasmanian

Aborigines in their myth describing the acquisition of fire. Two men, who are now the stars Castor and Pollux, were seen by the Aborigines standing at the top of a mountain. They threw down fire which fell among the Aborigines, who then ran away frightened, but returned to make a fire with wood (Maddock, cited in Clark 1987:59). This myth may have formed part of an ancient fire mythology, or songline, once found throughout South-Eastern Australia (Maddock, cited in Clark 1987:59).

The Aboriginal people living around The Mountain may well have looked to it as the place where the two men stood, particular during the periods when Castor and Pollux set behind The Mountain.[2] Even today the signpost designating the path to the Lightning Tree from the Pinnacle Road reflects our fascination with sky being brought to earth. On a grander scale this is represented by The Mountain, the most successful growth of the earth, rising to meet the sky. Such a powerful image forms the spatial arena in which our lives unfold.

One resident of Hobart explained to me that when living in Melbourne he found there were no visual landmarks on a grand scale by which he could orientate himself. He felt swamped by a stand of buildings or lost in the suburban sprawl. By contrast, in Hobart he felt that The Mountain enabled him to always identify where he was, giving rise to a feeling of security.

Kevin Lynch has written that "the terror of being lost comes from the necessity that a mobile organism be oriented in its surroundings" and his study on imageability suggested that poor imageability may cause emotional insecurity and fear (cited in Norberg-Schulz 1980:19). To feel lost is evidently the opposite of the feeling of security which distinguishes dwelling. The Mountain draws attention to its significance and impact on one's sense of place because of its imageability; it defines Hobart's setting.

Defining Hobart

The Mountain played a significant part in defining the actual siting of

Hobart. During the sermon for the Prosperity of the Settlement at Sullivan's Cove in 1804, the Reverend Robert Knopwood declared:

> Let us turn our thoughts likewise upon the mountains and hills which surround us; without these the earth would be but an uncomfortable habitation; these being made by a merciful God to supply the lower parts of the earth with springs and rivers, so useful to man and beast (cited in de Quincey 1987:1)

After Risdon Cove had proved unsuccessful, the settlement of Hobart was shifted to Sullivan's Cove. This new site was chosen due to the large and deep harbour, the constant source of fresh water (the Hobart Rivulet) which flowed from The Mountain, the level ground and fertile dolerite soils, eroded and washed down from The Mountain's slopes, and the shelter The Mountain and foothills provided.

The growth of the city was along the banks of the Rivulet until it became of little use for, firstly, residential housing (because the water became polluted), and later for industry (because of alternative forms of energy and water supply). Presently the Rivulet, the source of life that sustained the early settlement, runs entombed under the heart of Hobart. Its function now is little more than a storm-water drainage channel.

Natural features that provide links to a city's historic definition are often, like the Rivulet, buried under brick and ashphalt. Buried too are the bonds that people had developed with these places. Yet in Hobart, the harbour, the hills and The Mountain remain as distinct visual reminders of the city's origins. On a grand scale, these also remain major constraints on urban expansion, having "effectively confined the direction of extension to about 60 degrees of arc northward, and less southward" (Solomon 1976:8).

Sentinel of The City

The city continues to expand, but The Mountain remains, much like it was nearly two hundred years ago, the sentinel of the city. The 'sentinel' image was promoted by The Romantic painters. Often they would paint castles in

the distant background as symbols of the noble and grand, towering above all. In Hobart, where no castles stood, The Mountain took their place.

In 1968 there was a proposal to use floodlighting to illuminate the Organ Pipes. Like Edinburgh Castle, The Mountain would have stood ablaze through the night and further entrenched its role as protector of the city in the minds of the citizens. The idea was reported to have received enthusiastic support from the citizenry "and if that counts for anything it is sure to be a success" (Mercury 9 March, 1968).[3] But what is it that Hobart's citizens feel The Mountain is protecting them from?

"Implicit in Australia is a natural mystery more powerful than the civilisation around its fringes" (Ross 1986:226). For mainlanders this mystery centres on the desolate outback, where life constantly thirsts in searing heat. Yet for Hobartians the natural mystery lies in the wild and rugged South-West, where life abounds. Lepricorns, trolls, goblins, even bunyips seem out of place in this environment; the vernacular language has no characters of imagination to sooth the questioning mind as to what this mysterious region harbours.[4] The Mountain looks over the city reassuringly, protecting it from unknown spirits that lie within the natural mystery of the South-West beyond.

Tim Thorne twists this image of The Mountain as a natural defence back on itself in his poem "Hobart Town 1".

> Too dark for green, the hills, erect
> around the vicious symmetry
> of the bizarre settlement, stood
> as defence. This was the biggest town
> Loveless[5] had ever seen and he
> was locked into its linear thrust.
>
> "There are no slaves under the British
> dominions . . . You are only
> prisoners." (Arthur, 1836)
> Hobart, nor Tolpuddle, no slave:
> there, demands had been ramparts,
> their names like the angular twigs

> and bushfire-blots that these old hills
> threw round the squares were to keep warm
> the children of Dorset. The children here
> were waiting, cold. Mountains, unlike
> damning language, proved no defence . . . (Thorne 1990:61)

The surrounding hills, as yet unsettled, would have appeared as ramparts, and like the naming of streets and squares with familiar names, implied protection, a warmth and security. Yet The Mountain provided no defence, perhaps because the enemy came from within: within the 'vicious symmetry' of 'the bizzare settlement' where there were no slaves, only prisoners, the 'linear thrust' provided no warmth for the waiting children.

Standing on top of The Mountain, the sharp contrast between Thorne's linear thrust of a city, and the natural mystery of the South-West is dramatically revealed. The city appears to be forging up the foothills confronting the eastern slopes, whilst in contrast The Mountain reaches out in a broad plateau towards the South-West. The linear thrust of expansion is met with a fortress-like defence, whilst the plateau provides a threshold to the wilderness, an invitation to explore the mysterious interior.

Threshold to The Wilderness

Kevin Kiernan accepted The Mountain's invitation. As a child growing up in Fern Tree in the 1950s, Kiernan was impressed by The Mountain being the gateway to the wilderness:

> I could draw a wide arc on the map from the summit of the mountain westwards one hundred kilometers to the coast without crossing a road. The wilderness seemed to start in my backyard (Kiernan 1985:18).

During his expeditions into the South-West he developed a particular affinity for Lake Pedder: "only at Lake Pedder did I feel somehow loved in return . . . always it was the same feeling; of being home, of being secure, of belonging: that this was a place to be shared" (Kiernan 1985:18). The Mountain was the threshold to the South-West wilderness and to Kiernan's temple, Lake Pedder.

Seddon comments that: ". . . cities are in many ways insulated by technology from environmental realities, and thus generate a world in which myths can grow and flourish" (1976:12). As an example he cites the myth that Australia is a big country with almost limitless productive potential, when arable land is in fact only equal to that of France. The Mountain looms over Hobart, a constant reminder of the wilderness that lays beyond. Myths may still flourish but for some people The Mountain encourages an understanding of environmental realities and also induces feelings of reverence towards the natural world.

A Shrine

As I have suggested in chapter two, mountains, because of their nature, attract people seeking spiritual replenishment. Mount Wellington was often regarded with a great deal of reverence by the colonising Europeans, and more than likely by the Aboriginal people as well. The Hobart Town Courier reporting Lady Franklin's second expedition described ". . . another caravan of pilgrims" who would "visit the shrine of Mount Wellington" (29 December,1837). Names such as Cathedral Rock, the Organ Pipes, the Lectern and Pulpit Rock, suggest the reverent attitude The Mountain inspired in the early explorers.

The orientation of the Organ Pipes engenders a reverent quality. Aligned like an Egyptian temple they face east to greet the sunrise.

> Where the great mount's apocalyptic beast
> Now guards your bones and watches from the height,
> Fixing his lion gaze towards the east
> For the return of light, . . . (Hope 1985:56)

Michael Dransfield in his poem "To the colour grey/Hobart", belatedly looked to The Mountain as a source of spiritual inspiration:

> pavement morning
> out in the streets
> looking for something
> finding the same
> blind corners

> . . . days blow past
> what we leave is nothing
> there is a mountain in the window
> i'll climb it later
> might find
> something at the top (Dransfield 1983:134-135).

Congregating on The Mountain, often on Sundays, people seek purification, collecting clean mountain water, breathing in fresh air and sometimes descending with the body of The Mountain itself in the form of trophied snow.

The godly nature of The Mountain is alluded to by Andrew Sant in his poem "Postcard from Hobart".

> . . . If there had been gods here, in some earlier time,
> they would have been of the overseeing
> mountain passing through its transfigurations
>
> of colour, snow-capped or cool purple at dusk,
> tossing off clouds and in summer bleeding fire
> from dry forests. As it is, below,
>
> churches have staked out the ground
> the spires exclaim. Sky, water, mountain; along the streets
> repeated blinds are lowered in astonishment (Sant 1985:45).

Sant suggests that The Mountain's transfigurations give it a reverent quality. Even though our gods have staked out their claims below, The Mountain remains above "and one has a sense of living alongside what is ancient and natural" (Scott pers. comm.).

Reflector of Natural Forces

The Mountain is a reflector of the natural forces that mark out our days and years. In 1831, G.T. Boyes wrote to his wife:

> You cannot imagine such a beautiful Race as the rising generation in this Colony . . . it is extraordinary the passionate love they have for the country of their birth, but I believe it is remarked that the Natives of a Mountain Land feel stronger attachment for their birth place than the Natives of the Plains (cited in Roe 1987:4).

Gwen Harwood suggested her childrens' early years living at Fern Tree were influential; all now have nature-orientated occupations (pers. comm.). In her poem An Impromptu for Ann Jennings, she uses nature on The Mountain to recall her early days of parenthood:

> Sing, memory, sing those seasons in the freezing
> suburb of Fern Tree, a rock shaded place
> with tree ferns, gullies, snow falls and eye-pleasing
> prospects from paths along the mountain-face.
>
> Nursing our babies by huge fires of wattle,
> or pushing them in prams when it was fine.
>
> . . . Before the last great fires we two went climbing
> like gods or blessed spirits in summer light
> with the quiet pulse of mountain water chiming
> as if twenty years were one long dreaming night,
>
> above the leafy dazzle of the streams
> to fractured rock, where water had its birth,
> and stood in silence, at the roots of dreams,
> content to know: our children walk the earth (1987:52).

The seasons, the weather, light and night are chronicled by The Mountain, and we may form a bond with The Mountain as we respond to these processes:

> Changing emotive qualities endow places with a kind of soul,
> an image of our own existence that permeates yet is apart
> from matter, allowing us to feel related personally to our
> surrounds (Plummer 1987:139).

. . . Light

The passing of daylight draws attention to one's participation in a world of constant movement and change:

> By this participation in time made possible by evolving
> lights, we are freed from being the passive receptors of
> cadaverous images, and act as visionary poets in the ongoing
> recreation of a living world (Plummer 1987:139).

The Mountain presents a screening of the evolving day which reflects peoples' own biological rhythms. As activity for the coming day awakens in

Hobart the sun's rays first hover on The Mountain top and begin to descend The Mountain side, bringing light to the morning after a period of quiescence.

> A dawn, a sense of freedom, is on the rise. Then, the slightest shade of something lighter is truly a moment of hope. Similarly, hoping for light actively pushes darkness away . . . the dynamic dialection of air and earth reverberate (Bachelard 1988:265).

The Mountain is dressed in an orange glow, and stands as full-warning of the impending day.

The sun continues its journey across the sky, intensifying its energy through the middle of the day. The Organ Pipes reflect a visible dialogue of this journey as the outstanding, vertical columns break the oncoming light, collecting a congregation of shadows as the sun subsides toward evening. From a distance The Organ Pipes present a sequence of light, shadow, light; chopped light and cast shadows reinforce and invigorate each other.

The Mountain's shadow extending over a fog-covered Hobart (photograph courtesy of Scott Coleman).

Deep reverberations between light atmospheres and our feelings conjure up images. Graeme Hetherington writes:

> Our history here is nasty, brutish and short-lived:
> Convicts and one exterminated race.
> The hulking mountain's twilight markings tell
> Of aboriginals cold as gun-metal blue,
> Of convicts in the shadows cast,
> A past that's better buried with the dead.
> There is a kind of lean-to of the mind
> In folk who have no once-upon-a-time (1986:41).

In Hetherington's view Tasmanian history is too awful to face, let alone honour, and The Mountain's shadow serves as a symbol of this dark past. I thought of this poem, as I stood in Hunter Street, watching the sun dip behind The Mountain, casting its 'twilight markings'. Bronze, circular markers, embedded in the street, form a large dot-to-dot image of the long-since buried Hunter Island[6], an attempt to rejuvenate the folk's once-upon-a-time.

. . . Night

Our quest for light is perhaps strongest in the night when darkness envelops our world. In earlier days The Mountain would have stood anonymous in a pitch black night, or as a subtle darkened profile in a moonlit sky. Presently a light glows from a building on the Pinnacle, drawing moth-like attention to The Mountain's summit and advertising the ridged silhouette across the western night sky.

Richard Tipping shone five lights, representing the stars of the Southern Cross, onto the Organ Pipes one evening. "Not many locals actually looked uphill to see it on the mountain, but they did see it on the television" (Thomas 1983:8). For those that did look towards Mount Wellington, was the western sky suddenly devoid of its presence, did the lights give a momentary sense of an expanded sky suggesting an horizon more suited to more effortless horizontal gazing?

. . . Clouds

The Mountain draws our gaze upwards:

> Even still upward rises the crowning peak, surmounted with a small finger-like object named the Pinnacle where at the height of 4,166 feet earth kisses Heaven and frequently hides her head in snowy folds of its fleecy clouds (unknown source, cited in Turnbull 1949:19-20).

The mood of The Mountain is greatly influenced by the mass of scattered or collected clouds that gather over it. This relationship is explored by Ivan Head in his poem "Mt Wellington".

> Take the air
> and make it speak,
> seek atmosphere articulate.
>
> Voice from cloud,
> aloud unless the ear
> is accident to the word.
>
> The mountain
> makes its own cloud blanket,
> drawn down
>
> like a stone-rug
> or rapid rising as a kite
> where it lifts over ridge edge.
>
> The summit is a stone jug
> pouring cloud which
> my children catch in a jar (1991:44).

The Mountain draws down the atmosphere's voice in an infinite array of forms and images. A gathering of many different types of clouds, particularly in Spring and Autumn, seems to me to be a distinctive phenomenon of Hobart skies. Is this due to The Mountain and its physical effect on the clouds or is it because The Mountain continually draws one's gaze upwards, so unknowingly one becomes a knowledgable spectator of the sky?

A sequence of clouds drawn down by The Mountain.

. . . Weather

A 1915 guidebook commented; "it is . . . good to see how the brow of Mount Wellington smiles or frowns upon us to warn us if the elements will be kind or savage" (Hobart Tourist Bureau 1915:54). The Mountain assists people in becoming amateur experts on the short-term weather patterns. 'What's The Mountain doing?' is one of the most commonly used colloquial mountain-idioms[7], and indicates in the vernacular language an understanding that locally the climate of Hobart, particularly the Western Shore, is governed by The Mountain. As early as 1822, the surveyor George Evans informed emigrants to Hobart that inclement weather could be easily forecast by looking to The Mountain (Evans 1967:33).

The 1912 Tasmanian Accommodation Guide gave a summary of how the weather could be forecast by looking at the cloud patterns around The Mountain.[8] But for myself, and indeed many residents, the method of forecasting is rarely explicated and relies more on a feeling derived from what The Mountain is 'doing'. It is not hard to derive from this feeling a sense that one's own moods, often instigated by the weather, are reflected by The Mountain. When grey clouds are swirling down around it one feels a

The Mountain hidden and then revealed.

heaviness descending. It may be days before the mass of cloud clears, blue sky appears and the view of The Mountain engenders a sense of space above and inspires an uplifting feeling.

Slowness

The most obvious natural forces present The Mountain in an endless number of changing prospects, from day to day and from season to season. Peter Levi writes of more subtle forces:

> It is easy enough to consider why mountains are the shape they are . . . they seem to preserve the process of eruption and creation . . . But what one likes about them is their slowness. The surface of this planet has settled itself into shape terribly slowly (1984:39).

Clues to The Mountain's 'slowness' are found in its talus slopes, two distinctive and appropriately named examples being 'The Potato Field' and 'The Ploughed Field'. To the trained eye these represent "constant erosion tearing at mountains" and may "present a gloomy picture of the future. Our island will continue to have 'ploughed fields' till Domesday at which point geologists predict it will be reduced overall to sea level" ('Peregrine' 1977:6).

For others the slowness of mountains is more apparent when earthquakes, volcanoes or landslides occur. Landslides, and their aftermath, visually stimulate a realisation that the mountain is unstable under the all pervasive force of gravity. One such occurrence for Mount Wellington was on June 6, 1872 after torrential rain and unprecedented flooding. The Mercury reported:

> . . . Residents of O'Briens Bridge heard at 10.30 p.m. a dreadfull dull rumbling sound, a heavy smothered crash, and a deafening roar of flowing waters . . . About an hour after the sound was heard that caused so much consternation the waters were heard approaching with a dull rumbling sound. An immense wall of it was seen in the darkness to be coming on, bearing onward with irresistible force everything with which it came in contact. Trees were torn out by the roots . . . masses of rock, branches, portions of

> broken buildings and houses were carried away like matchboxes (cited in Aves 1947:24).

One man lost his life in the flood and the next day the face of The Mountain was seen to be altered by a great yellow gash where the slip had occurred.

There was, and amongst many people still is, a common misconception that The Mountain's creation was volcanic. Wintle notes that the columnar structure of the rock "led many persons to regard it as being basaltic; being reminded of Stafford's Cave, or the Giant's Causeway . . ." (1866:3). It is in fact dolerite, like basalt an igneous rock, but dolerite is cooled deeper under the earth's crust. Ironically the word dolerite comes from the Greek, *doleros* which means deceptive, ". . . alluding to difficulty of identification" (Mitchell 1985:85).

It is interesting to imagine people living in Hobart believing they are in the shadow of a volcano. One friend related to me how, as a child, she would ask her mother what the emergency plan was if The Mountain erupted. I know my interest at a young age in the Pompei excavations would have taken on considerably more meaning if I too had held this misconception.

Fire

In fact the Mountain has 'erupted':

> Hobart was a terrifying sight from the air at 6.45 tonight. Smoke as thick as cumulus cloud was rising to 8000 feet for 50 miles around the city. It was impossible to make out Mount Wellington, which towers 4500 feet over Hobart . . . Looking down on the thick brownish smoke it appeared as if a volcano had erupted (Sydney Morning Herald, cited in Wettenhall 1975:122).

What this reporter was actually describing was the aftermath of 'Black Tuesday', February 7, 1967, when Hobart's surrounds were absorbed by a fire that devasted the landscape.

After the fire The Mountain looked strangely unfamiliar. Tom Errey, a

resident of Fern Tree for the past forty years, had no qualms about returning to the village despite losing his house to the fire. He watched with interest the extraordinary succession of stages that The Mountain went through, phoenix-like, in the months after the fire; the masses of leaves that fell from the trees, their disintegration, the washing out of charred material and the differing tones that The Mountain presented as it passed through these stages (pers. comm.).

A sudden and obvious change to a place may cause people to sense a loss of the qualities of the place that previously they took for granted. 'Peregrine' lamented the fire's destruction of the bushy screens that hid some of The Mountain's oddities and more generally wrote:

> For myself, as well as for others who knew it and tramped over it long before the fires, Mt Wellington is hardly worth visiting today, or even looking at. In the fires it deteriorated to merely a lump of rock and scorched earth and it's never been really pleasant since then (1972:6).

Memorials to the fire are evident all over The Mountain. This charred and crippled bush still clutches to a boulder on The Mountain's plateau.

For Kevin Kiernan it wasn't until he was forced to move from his Fern Tree home, destroyed in the fire, that he came to realise just how important the wild backyard had been to him (1985:18). The fire had an even more significant impact for him because the sight of the charred and blackened Mountain was a constant reminder that his temple, the South-West wilderness and Lake Pedder, was also being despoliated.

> With summer over, each time I looked at Mount Wellington something seemed to be terribly wrong, something more than the strange monochrome landscape of winter snow upon the mountain blackness: the wilderness beyond was facing destruction (Kiernan 1985:18).

In many cultures, destructive natural occurrences are regarded as signs from the gods and result in an examination of the society's conduct. Much was sacrificed to the fire of 1967, and The Mountain stood as a reminder to people of the need to re-examine and understand the role they had to play in caring for the natural environment.

> . . . it will be a long time before the forest charm is restored once more, a long time before bare spots are covered up, and the mountain ceases to present to us a monument to the then prevailing don't care attitude towards bushfires ('Peregrine' 1972:6).

Similarly, when The Mountain changes at the behest of human endeavours, people may become introspective, and question whether the developments indicate an understanding of The Mountain itself. Perhaps this is why some people find the idea of a cable car so aggravating, for it seeks to install something constantly moving on what is predominately still. It would impose the essential kinetic nature of humans onto what is infinitely slower. In this way it perhaps reflects an insensitivity to the essence of The Mountain.

Permanence

Through all The Mountain's apparent changes and slowness, it remains a brooding permanence. Against the burgeoning settlement of Hobart, The Mountain stands defiant, an observation made by Andrew Sant in his poem

"A Mount Wellington Sequence (Photograph in a Pub)":

> Mount Wellington (a local
> Everest or Fujiyama)
> is erected, snow-capped,
> pictorial, behind it all,
> distantly accepting the new
> and frantic settlement
> though without the road
> like a cord wrapped
>
> round its vast treed
> and bouldered breadth.
> It looks so fresh, unchanged.
> You feel a sense of dominance
> looking back, the past's
> activity overcome; the mountain,
> ageless, corrects that, ignoring
> years like melting snows (Sant 1982:54).

In our seemingly impermanent world, things of permanence gain in stature. One resident of Hobart told me how she had felt remorse when places of deep significance to her were destroyed. However, her relationship with The Mountain endured because she felt it would always remain. Margaret Scott believes it represents security because "it can't be moved. It's one of the few certainties" (pers. comm.). In her poem "Encounter in Van Diemen's Land", "the changing, changeless mountain shone again" (1983:52), impervious to the stain of the colony's convict history.

Immersion in Our World

The Mountain provides Hobart with a permanent and unique spatial setting which may be enhanced or eroded through architecture and urban planning. In dwelling with The Mountain, we may be made more aware of its' meanings and significances by sensitive planning:

> Urban form that exploits and celebrates natural and cultural processes can add layers of meaning, functional and symbolic, to extend or amplify the urban experience. If this form emerges from the underlying character of the place the results will reinforce the familiar and extend awareness and comprehension of its uniqueness (Woolley 1991b:6).

Since colonial times the topography of Hobart has made an impression on the imagination: "Imagination has traced in its natural outlines a resemblence to the seven hilled Roman capital, once the mistress of the World" (West 1852:34). Lady Franklin's new-world Parthenon, 'Ancanthe', built to propagate her vision of a city of cultural achievement and learning, lies under The Mountain in Lenah Valley perhaps emulating the Greeks' siting of their temples to respect distant mountains.

Imagination, however, was lacking in the planning of Hobart, which was largely influenced by Governor Macquarie. He "favoured the grid system comprised of uniform blocks bounded by neat and correspondingly uniform streets" (de Quincey 1987:42). This system, Thorne's 'linear thrust', paid little regard to the characteristic topography of the place. Like the colonial artist's conveyance of the picturesque, it was an attempt to exert control and order over an unfamiliar and wild environment.

> The enormity of space, for all its potential beauty was threatening. Space was felt not as liberating but as isolating - perhaps by colonising or affecting it, there was a chance to negate it (Woolley 1991b:3).

The spatial setting of Hobart is very much defined by the relationship between the River, the hills and Mountain and the sky. From the River there is a progressive layering back to the height of The Mountain (Woolley pers. comm.). The negation of this space is seen even today as tributaries of the suburban sprawl are encroaching upon The Mountain's foothills, besieging The Mountain's image as bastion of Hobart. The vegetated ridge lines provide a link between the urban and natural environments. They emphasise this essential layering characteristic of Hobart. This connection may be eroded if the built environment takes the ridges.

From within the city, this link is suddenly altered or lost when the built environment destroys view lines to The Mountain. These views lines add to the city's character; for example, the view from Franklin Square, where a narrow stretch of The Mountain is framed by sandstone walls, provides a

subtle connection to Hobart's past. Small openings into the distance break up the monotony of the urban environment and confirm peoples' own dynamic essence. In contrast to "sitting and taking in the view, moving and seeing your movement in relation to The Mountain is very important"[9] (de Gryse pers. comm.).

An Icon of Hobart

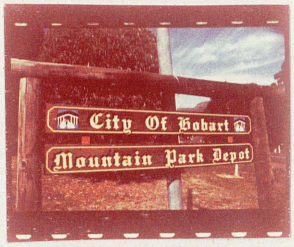
From within Paul Zicka's "Place of Contemplation" set in the bushland of Mount Nelson, the only uninterrupted view is of Mount Wellington reflected in a mirror.

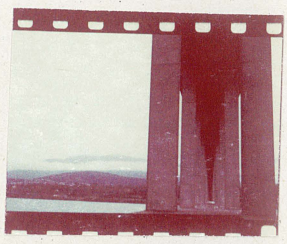
Detail of Paul Zicka's Place of Contemplation.
(Courtesy of Paul Zicka, Photograph by John Farrow)

Zicka writes:

> As you approach Hobart you suddenly come upon a panoramic view; the massive mountain confronts you - physically beautiful and yet an awesome ever-present symbol (1984).

The Mountain as an icon of Hobart is not just an artist's perspective but is one responded to by the community as a whole. The Hobart City Council's logo stylistically combines The Mountain, the Tasman Bridge, and sails on the River as symbols of Hobart.





The Hobart City Council's stylistic logo and a photograph showing the bridge, river and Mountain relationship.

The Mountain stands as a permanent backdrop to conversations and every-day events. It reflects the passing days and watches over our personal and collective histories. Its imageability makes it an easily identified symbol of Hobart, a city that is renowned for its natural setting and comparatively slow lifestyle, qualities reflected by The Mountain. By dwelling with The Mountain and allowing it to come forth into the world as it is, these significances are revealed.

Endnotes

[1] On the sign is written:

> This tree was struck by lightning on the 11th of December, 1986 and a large slab of wood was blasted off the tree and across the track. In this case it was raining and no fire occurred. Occasionally lightning strikes during dry thunderstorms and fires are started. This was the main cause of bushfires for hundreds of millions of years before humans evolved. Lightning still accounts for five to ten bushfires per year in Tasmania. But twenty times this number are started by careless or willful misuse of matches.
>
> A. Mount, Forestry Commission

[2] Castor and Pollux are part of the constellation Gemini. Zodiac signs generally follow the same path as the sun across the sky , thus it is more than likely that the stars could be seen

setting behind The Mountain during certain times of the year (Jones pers. comm.). Viewed from Hobart, the sun sets almost directly behind The Mountain during the Equinoxes, particularly significant events indicating the changing seasons.

[3] The idea was conceived from a similar project undertaken on Table Mountain in Capetown, ironically the very same mountain that Mount Wellington was originally named after. The project, for some unreported reason, did not proceed. Table Mountain now has a cable car running to its pinnacle, on which there is a restaurant. Whilst visiting Capetown in the early 1960s and taking in the view from Table Mountain, the Queen of England reportedly told her palace staff that it was not as beautiful as Mount Wellington and the view over Hobart (Advocate 29 May, 1989).

[4] Although the perennial question of the Tasmanian Tiger's existence evokes tales that may evolve into a collective story of legendary status.

[5] George Loveless was the leader of the 'Tolpuddle Matyrs', six Dorchester labourers who were transported in 1833 for forming a union in an attempt to raise the wages of farm hands to ten shillings a week (Smith and Scott 1985:113).

[6] Hunter Island, although now only an image of the mind, has strong connections with Tasmania's dark past. Pilfering of supplies had been a problem at the Risdon Cove site, and the island provided an easily guarded storage area for the settlement at Sullivans Cove. As a further deterrent to stealing, culprits would be left to hang on the gibbets.

[7] Gwen Harwood commented that when she moved to Fern Tree, friends warned her, 'The Mountain tells you when to take in the clothes' (pers. comm.).

[8] The guide advised that if a light band of cloud appears across the Organ Pipes in the early morning during the summer, then the day will be fine with an afternoon sea breeze. If there is a solid grey cloud across the Mountain followed by squalls and showers in the city, it means that until that cloud disperses there will be no sun. And when the cliffs project and The Mountain looms close, there will be a change coming in from the east (Tasmanian Tourist Association 1912:49).

[9] In Tom Errey's home in Fern Tree one is struck by the expansive views of The Mountain. However he commented that he regrets failing to recognise the importance of smaller and more subtle views of The Mountain when designing and building his home; large and expansive views tend to be taken-for-granted whereas smaller views may not (pers. comm.).

CONCLUSION

Bringing the theme of the sense of place into peoples' conscious awareness helps to "foster understanding, sensitizing people to the role of place and dwelling in their own lives and thus perhaps helping them to promote change in their own and others lives in the future" (Seamon 1982:134). Heidegger's notion of dwelling has practical implications for the way one senses a place.

> To be able to dwell between heaven and earth, man has to 'understand' these two elements, as well as their interaction. The word 'understand' here does not mean scientific knowledge; it is rather an existential concept which denotes the experience of *meanings*. When the environment is meaningful man feels 'at home' (Norberg-Schulz 1980:23).

Mountains exemplify most obviously this mode of natural understanding and thus may gather meanings that engender a more profound sense of place. They represent the highest meeting point of heaven and earth, a place where people can sense a godliness. In their essence, their vertical immenseness assembling Heidegger's notion of the fourfold, mountains implicate Being: ". . . mountains are places within the comprehensive landscape, places which make the structure of Being manifest" (Norberg-Schulz 1980:24).

The pinnacle of Mount Wellington lies seven and a half kilometres almost due west of Hobart's General Post Office. For everybody who visits or lives in Hobart and the surrounding areas, it is an unavoidable and distinctly recognisable feature of the landscape. The Mountain stands over Hobart drawing the earth to the sky. It is an intrinsic element in the *genius loci* of Hobart and its surrounds. As people experience the *genius loci* their sense of place embodies a particular relationship with The Mountain.

The physical setting of The Mountain presents a number of poses according to which direction you approach it from. For residents of Hobart, familiar

with The Mountain's form in the distance, it represents a landmark indicating home. For others less familiar, it is one of the first features they sense as a quality of Hobart. Just as The Mountain presents a variety of poses, it also engenders diversity in peoples' perceptions of it. Conrad Lopez observed:

> The perceptions of any people wash over the land like a flood, leaving ideas hung up in the brush, like pieces of damp paper to be collected and deciphered. No one can tell the whole story (1986:251).

To decipher peoples' perceptions of Mount Wellington, I focused on artistic portrayals. This brief study in chapter three indicated that artists' portrayals of The Mountain reflected the more general attitudes towards the environment of the day. Presently, as concern grows for the environment as a whole, so does the concern for the taken-for-granted places in our lives.

> The ordinary places and objects that make up our everyday landscape, our personal countryside, stand as living monuments to our continuing survival and feeling response to the world. Without such monuments . . . our sense of identity begins to crumble and warp (Harrison, cited in King and Clifford 1985:1).

Mount Wellington's significance is only just being realised in the sense that it represents a 'living monument' of our past and has a role in maintaining our 'sense of identity' into the future. This is perhaps indicative in the more recent poetry and photography of The Mountain which explores the underlying meanings captured by this prominent feature as it overlooks the city. The Mountain is common ground[1], it harbours many stories for many people: "it is difficult to see a place, a landscape, without sensing its ghosts: ghosts of the imagination . . . ghosts of legend and the ghosts of local characters past" (King and Clifford 1985:4).

One senses The Mountain's ghosts more intimately by pursuing activities on it, although its significance is apparent for many people who have rarely socialized with it. For the Aborigines, we can only speculate as to whether The Mountain was a place of significance for them. Their culture was

annihilated by the early European colonials who sought to control and dominate their newly discovered territory. These intentions are apparent in the early depictions of Mount Wellington, as well as in the early exploitive nature of the activities on The Mountain. Perhaps underlying these feelings was a very real fear of the natural environment. The Mountain would have, at the same time been both reassuring and unnerving. It was a feature of the landscape that appealed to the romantically inclined and served as protection from the wilderness beyond. Yet it reflected the unpredictable, unfamiliar and at times harsh environment.

As people became more familiar with the environment and pursuing activities on The Mountain became a popular pastime, attitudes of a caring nature were more evident. Such attitudes centred firstly on aesthetic qualities, but often these were transgressed to make way for developments boasting engineering and economic progress. More recently, areas of concern have been extended by the science of ecology.

By sparing The Mountain, we are not only sensitive to its aesthetic and ecological qualities but also its meanings and significances. Such an attitude Relph describes as 'environmental humility', which is concerned with understanding the individual realities of places:

> The individual distinctiveness of a place lies not so much in its exact physical forms and arrangements as in the meanings accorded to it by a community of concerned people . . . Much as a craftsman imparts something of his personality to the things he makes, so a community can transfer its character to a landscape (1981:172).

Our approach towards The Mountain, our perceptions of the environment and our ability to authentically sense a place are mutually dependent upon our activities on The Mountain and, following Heidegger, upon our means of developing sparing relationships with the environment and our ability to dwell.

Endnotes

[1] "Common Ground" is a term coined by a small charitable organisation in Britain whose stated objectives are:

> . . . to promote the importance of common plants and animals, familiar and local places, local distinctiveness and our links with the past; and to explore the emotional value these things have for us by forging practical and philosophical links between the arts and the conservation of nature and landscapes (Clifford and King 1984:1).

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APPENDIX A

General Interview Questions

How long have you lived in Hobart?
Where did you live before, especially your childhood, and for how long?
What was the landscape like (eg. was it flat or hilly)?
What were your first impressions on arriving into Hobart?
    How did you find The Mountain's presence?
Why did decide to settle in Hobart?
Do you now call Hobart home?

What suburbs have you lived in?
Why did you move?
Did your attitudes towards The Mountain change when you moved?

What interest(s) over the years have involved you with The Mountain?
Do you spend much time on The Mountain?
What activities?
    Why do these activities on the Mountain?

In your day-to-day activity, do you take much notice of The Mountain?
When you go to work, lunchtime, coming home?
Do you feel The Mountain affects your moods?

Have you spent much time away from Hobart since settling here?
Have you felt a homesickness/nostalgia for Hobart?
Can you describe the image of Hobart you have when you're away?
How do you find travelling/living in different environments?
    Do you feel lost in foreign landscapes?
How do you feel on returning?

When a visitor arrives in Hobart, what's their common response to The Mountain?
Do you take them to the top, walk the tracks etc.?

Is The Mountain any different from other mountains?
What is special about Mount Wellington?
If it was decided to rename Mt Wellington, what do you think would be an appropriate name?

Imagine if you will, that the clouds have descended over The Mountain and when they clear, The Mountain has gone, all you see is low, undulating hills fold into the distance.
    How would you feel?
    What difference would it make to living in Hobart?

People often talk of 'The Mountain', 'what's The Mountain doing', can you think of any other colloquial expressions?

What are your feelings towards proposed (and completed) developments on The Mountain, eg. the cable car, the viewing shelter?
How would/do they change The Mountain's character?

APPENDIX B

Some Poems of Mount Wellington

(and related topics)

The Pinnacle Road

The men who are building the Pinnacle Road,
Up on the mountain side,
Are a cosmopolitan noisy crew,
Deep in their hearts they're staunch and true,
Sinners are many and saints are few,
Up on the mountain side.

When they indulge in topical talk
Up on the mountain side,
The language they use is mostly slang,
Whether in praise of Lyons or Lang;
They're a happy, contented, jovial gang
Up on the mountain side.

Each one is daily pulling his weight
Up on the mountain side,
Making it safe for you and me
Paving the way for posterity,
To enjoy the view where God's gifts are free
Up on the mountain side.

When unborn thousands gaze upon
The view from the mountain side,
Some lyrical bard will compose an ode
Where all the praise may be bestowed
Upon the men building the Pinnacle Road,
Up on the mountain side.

M.J. 'Mulga Mick' O'Reilly, 1936.

Mt Wellington (Sanitorium of Tasmania)

When you've sampled doctor's tonics and the chemist's patent pills
And you're sick of taking pick-ups everyday;
When you've tried all sorts of nostrums to cure your fancied ills,
And you cannot chase the darned blues away;
Just stroll up to the mountain, where the air is pure and clear,
And the handiworks of Nature are all blest,
You'll forget about your troubles in that glorious atmosphere;
There your jaded mind and body will find rest.

High up upon that mountain where the view is clear and bright,
The beauties of our harbour can be seen;
Its miles of placid waters fill the soul with pure delight,

With its mirrored shades of blue and gold and green.
Away across the landscape where the land waves rise and fall,
As the soft clouds cast their shadows to and fro,
That mighty mount, Ben Lomond, stands high above them all
With its rugged peaks e'er purified with snow.

From the top of Hobart's mountain, with its scenery so grand
You can study Mother Nature at her best;
From the first bright ray of sunshine that illuminates the land,
To the glorious golden sunset in the West.
Where the myriads of gum trees with their varied shades of green
Cast their shadows o'er the gullies dark and deep.
Where maiden streams that issue from the mountain's breast are seen,
And their gurgling noises never seem to sleep.

There your thoughts will rise so far above the sordid things of life,
As your lungs inhale the ozone from the air;
And far away will seem to you the world and all its strife
Its petty ills, its envy and its care.
Your soul may burst the shackles of convention's binding laws
And spread its wings in imagination's sphere;
High upon that mountain top, for a moment you will pause
To drink in happiness unspoilt by earthly fear.

M.J. 'Mulga Mick' O'Reilly, 1936.

<u>Natures Organ Pipes</u>
Half way up Mount Wellington I see
Tall organ pipes with frame of stones,
Producing sounds of stragent tones,
Half way up Mount Wellington I hear
Them play when days and winds are frisky
And temperatures are fine and crispy

Half way up Mt Wellington I gaze
At nature's wondrous work and size,
Where listeners will pay their price,

Half way up Mt Wellington I look
Upon the organ pipes, its blocks
of heavy panels and striped rocks,

Half way up Mount Wellington I stay
To hear sweet music, celestial chords,
Much sweeter than the spoken words,
Half way up Mount Wellington I pray.

F.C. Meyer, 1940.

<u>A Mount Wellington Sequence</u>
1. Photograph in a Pub
In the foreground

an imported scene with
Georgian warehouses
stacked like boxes
along the quay; boats
jam Sullivan's Cove
with their arrivals
and departures -

so much activity
so far off the map:
things haven't changed;
a gunboat, sails lowered
protects the scene,
dominates the foreground
of the picture where
curious seagulls veer

and dip (they're not
quite used to being British).
I go to this scratched photo
to see what it was like
in the 1840s
whilst having a drink
- this pub was here -
and see what's changed, what cannot:

Mount Wellington (a local
Everest or Fujiyama)
is erected, snow-capped,
pictorial, behind it all,
distantly accepting the new
and frantic settlement
though without the road
like a cord wrapped

round its vast treed
and bouldered breadth.
It looks so fresh, unchanged.
You feel a sense of dominance
looking back, the past's
activity overcome; the mountain,
ageless, corrects that, ignoring
years like melting snows.

Andrew Sant, 1982.

Encounter in Van Diemen's Land
An old priest I met in the garden said,
"Is that Mount Wellington?"
And the mountain drew a cloud across its face.
"How do you find this place?"

The graceless gum trees tittered in the sun.
"Your children grow among the convicts' seed
And no one of account was ever sent,
Only the scum of Ireland and the slums."
The sea sighed and smiled.
The wattle powdered the air.
The garden shivered and grew and bred new life.
"Your hands are shaking," he said. "Like leaves."
Then the old man passed like a little stain
And the changing, changeless mountain shone again.
Margaret Scott, 1983.

Monet Refuses The Operation
Doctor, you say there are no haloes
around the street lights in Paris
and what I see is an aberration
caused by old age, an affliction.
I tell you it has taken me all my life
to arrive at the vision of gas lamps as angels,
to soften and blur and finally banish
the edges you regret I don't see,
to learn that the line I called the horizon
does not exist and sky and water,
so long, are the same state of being.
Fifty-four years before I could see
Rouen cathedral is built
of parallel shafts of sun,
and now you want to restore
my youthful errors: Fixed
notions of top and bottom,
the illusion of three dimensional space,
wistoria separate
from the bridge it covers.
What can I say to convince you
the houses of parliament dissolve
night after night to become
the fluid dream of the Thames?
I will not return to a universe
of objects that do not know each other,
as if islands were not the lost children
of one great continent, The world
is flux, and light becomes what it touches,
becomes water, lives on water
becomes lilac and mauve and yellow
and white and cerulear lamps,
small fists passing sunlight
so quickly to one another
that it would take long, streaming hair
inside my brush to catch it.
To paint the speed of light!

Our weighted shapes, these verticals,
Burn to mix with air
and change our bones, skin, clothes
to gases. Doctor,
if only you could see
how heaven pulls earth into its arms
and how infinitely the heart expands
to claim this world, blue vapor without end.

Lisel Mueller, 1984.

In Memoriam, J P M, 1976

Sleep sound here, brother, by your tranquil bay!
What can the tongue we both served now express
Other than this? All that is left to say
Is loss and emptiness;

Empty as ocean stretches towards the pole
Beyond this island which you loved, my friend,
This island where at last you reached your goal
Of landfall at land's end;

The island which your lucid poet's eye
Made living wildflower and sedge and tree
And creatures of its bushland, beach and sky
Took root in poetry;

Until a world to which your poet's mouth
Gave being and utterance, country of the heart,
Land of the Holy Spirit in the South
Became its counterpart.

It was my island too, my boyhood's home,
My "land of similes"; from all you gave,
This I hold close and cherish, as I come
To your untimely grave.

Where the great mount's apocalyptic beast
Now guards your bones and watches from the height,
Fixing his lion gaze towards the east
For the return of light,

Standing on this promontory of time
I match our spirits, the laggard and the swift;
Though we shared much beside the gift of rhyme,
Yours was the surer gift.

Your lamp trimmed, full of oil, you went before
Early to taste the Bridegroom's feast of song;
Wait for me friend, till I too reach that door;
I shall not keep you long.

A.D. Hope, 1985.

To the colour grey/Hobart
pavement morning
out in the streets
looking for something
finding the same
blind corners

at home my frail
attic trembles
leaf in the wind
storm coming

picked up a brush
colours
started to talk to the canvas

thinking of the last quartets

beethoven

dying
fist in the wind

hard to paint that

thought of some
acquaintances
who think in rhyme
see through bars of metre

of a composer
writing in octaves
image of hands with eight fingers

days blow past
what we leave is nothing
there is a mountain in the window
i'll climb it later
might find
something at the top

Michael Dransfield, 1985.

Postcard from Hobart
There are trees, in the botanical gardens,
as old as the oldest sandstone houses -
those unlopped concentric ripples of history

reprieved from the timber-cutters and the suburbs.

Much is hidden. In the museum one of the compromised survivors
of a race, caught on one of the earliest recordings,

sings barely decipherably at the push
of a button. There are glossy photographs.
Distances are foreshortened by an amphitheatre

of hills; advance-parties of houses slog
towards their summits though many regroup
around developments of concrete and windows,

cautious, insured. The harbour presses into the city
towards which, at night, fishing-boats come juggling lights
and sounding, as reprieve or forewarning, provident horns.

If there had been gods here, in some earlier time,
they would have been of the overseeing
mountain passing through its transfigurations

of colour, snow-capped or cool purple at dusk,
tossing off clouds and in summer bleeding fire
from dry forests. As it is, below,

churches have stacked out the ground
the spires exclaim. Sky, water, mountain; along the streets
repeated blinds are lowered in astonishment.

Andrew Sant, 1985.

Hobart
Night,
with a heavy moon
dawdling like an enchanted lover
in the frosty-blue sky,
the
bridge
flooded with lights
that drip their impressions
on calm water,
the calm water of the Derwent
drifting between broad hills to the sea,
the
city
that gathers sea breezes
sprawling with luminous display
to the foothills,
the
towering mountain
wearing a snood of early snow
moonwhite, like polarized sugar.
A nocturnal scene

for a souvenir photographer

Colin Knight, 1985.

Hobart Town (2)

The town is ugly having grown
Thus far beyond its lean-to past.
The balding hills with bushfire scars
Drift down and mess the ends of streets
At war against the lie of the land.
A few tall buildings make the others look
Eaten down with a green and red disease.
Breath-taking gusts of wind descend,
Claw-hammering loose weatherboard and tin.

The litter like a midden piling up
Enshrines it as a dumping ground
That's better buried with the past.

Our history here is nasty, brutish and short-lived:
Convicts and one exterminated race.
The hulking mountain's twilight markings tell
Of aboriginals cold as gun-metal blue,
Of convicts in the shadows cast,
A past that's better buried with the dead.
Perhaps that's why the people's nerves are bad.
There is a kind of lean-to of the mind
In folk who have no once-upon-a-time.

Graham Hetherington, 1986.

An Impromptu for Ann Jennings

Sing, memory, sing those seasons in the freezing
suburb of Fern Tree, a rock shaded place
with tree ferns, gullies, snow falls and eye-pleasing
prospects from paths along the mountain-face.

Nursing our babies by huge fires of wattle,
or pushing them in prams when it was fine,
exchanging views on diet, or Aristotle,
discussing Dr Spock or Wittgenstein,

cleaning up infants and the floors they muddied,
bandaging, making ends and tempers meet -
sometimes I'd mind your children while you studied,
or you'd take mine when I felt near defeat;

keeping our balance somehow through the squalling
disorder, or with anguish running wild
when sickness, a sick joke from some appalling
orifice of the nightwatch, touched a child;

think of it, woman: each of us gave birth to
four children, our new lords whose beautiful
tyrannic kingdom might restore the earth to
that fullness we thought lost beyond recall

when, in the midst of life, we could not name it,
when spirit cried in darkness, '*I will have. . .*'
but what? have what? There was no word to frame it,
though spirit beat at flesh as in a grave

from which it could not rise. But we have risen.
Caesar's we were, and wild, though we seemed tame.
Now we move where we will. Age is no prison
to hinder those whose joy has found its name.

We are our own. All Caesar's debts are rendered
in full to Caesar. Time has given again
a hundredfold those lives that we surrendered,
the love, the fruitfulness; but not the pain.

Before the last great fires we two went climbing
like gods or blessed spirits in summer light
with the quiet pulse of mountain water chiming
as if twenty years were one long dreaming night,

above the leafy dazzle of the streams
to fractured rock, where water had its birth,
and stood in silence, at the roots of dreams,
content to know: our children walk the earth.

Gwen Harwood, 1987.

Hobart Town 1

Too dark for green, the hills, erect
around the vicious symmetry
of the bizarre settlement, stood
as defence. This was the biggest town
Loveless had ever seen and he
was locked into its linear thrust.

"There are no slaves under the British
dominions . . . You are only
prisoners." (Arthur, 1836)
Hobart, nor Tolpuddle, no slave:
there, demands had been ramparts,
their names like the angular twigs
and bushfire-blots that these old hills
threw round the squares were to keep warm
the children of Dorset. The children here
were waiting, cold. Mountains, unlike

damning language, proved no defence.
Pardons, too, are written, and plans.
The chemicals in ink survive
blood. A race is degradable
even without baleful infant
streets, cattle, noose, syphilis, god.

The slaveless legions rounded up
their almost-martyrs, wrote them back
to start a sane war, to defend
with civilized paper a class.
On the antipodean hand,
the irrational state broke through.

Tim Thorne, 1990.

Mt Wellington
Take the air
and make it speak,
seek atmosphere articulate.

Voice from cloud,
aloud unless the ear
is accident to the word.

The mountain
makes its own cloud blanket,
drawn down

like a stone-rug
or rapid rising as a kite
where it lifts over ridge edge.

The summit is a stone jug
pouring cloud which
my children catch in a jar.

Ivan Head, 1991.